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Testing Tradition:

Applied ethnomusicology for social development
amongst Ga people in South-East Ghana

Dissertation

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MMus - Ethnomusicology

University of Sheffield

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30th July 2014

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Abstract

My research explored the role of ‘applied’ ethnomusicology in communication, culture and development whilst studying Ga people in urban Accra, south-east Ghana, and the dynamic role performance has played in the evolution of Ga society, taking account of the pre-colonial and post-colonial challenges experienced by Ga people in their urban environments.

Through scholarly literature and fieldwork, research sought to examine ‘traditional cultural expression’ used in Ga society as a dynamic process of communication that uses local language to convey messages and store information in oral stories, songs, dances, and through musical instruments.

My basic aim was to explore the role such methods of communication have had in the past, and their potential role in contemporary society to provide a process that brings people together in solidarity, enhancing personal and group identity, and assisting in collective problem identification, decision making, conflict resolution, and self-help social and human development.

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Songs maintained by the *Kpa* groups in Teshie.

One track; starts with *Mbraku* never changes chanting-type rhythm with call and response, followed by *Kpafio* used in other songs including *Kpa shimo*

Chapter One

1. 1. Introduction

This research aims to explore the potential for a local process of musical communication between Ga people (as defined below), for the purpose of their social and human 'development' (which I will seek to define and break down). Research aims to identify the usefulness, or otherwise, of the communication processes maintained in the fragmented remains of the Ga music-dance and performance culture.

The location of research was the Accra Plain in southeast Ghana, where the Ga inhabit six major settlements (to be defined), including Ga Mashie (central Accra), Osu, La, Teshie, Nungua and Tema.

Accra served as one of the entry points for early European entrepreneurs, adventurers, and missionaries,¹ as well as the capital of the British Gold Coast between 1877 and 1957. This research, therefore is the study of music in an expanding urban society, and the effects 'of colonialism,² power relations, and the social production of knowledge.'³ In such a context, Ga society has experienced the interventions of colonial occupation and an invented national culture since independence in 1957 when the Gold Coast was renamed Ghana.

My original concept was to explore the potential links between 'traditional' musical expression and contemporary social and community 'development' among the Ga. However, the term 'traditional' proved to be problematic as 'postcolonial theorists have brought [...] attention recently to the invention of traditions',⁴ before, during and after the colonial and postcolonial period. By using the term 'traditional' I refer to the dynamic cultural expression of an oral society, who 'use history as a legitimiser of action and to cement group cohesion'.⁵ Ga society practices ancestor worship which requires them to make reference to the past to legitimise their path into the future.

¹ In 1482, the Portuguese built a castle in Elmina on the Gold Coast.

² By 'colonial' or 'colonialism' I refer to the 'broad range of European influences in Africa from the fifteenth century onwards, rather than the narrower range of influences initiated during the 1880s. Strictly speaking, the colonial period began with partitioning of Africa and ended at independence, roughly 1884 to 1957. [...] But formal partitioning was preceded by several centuries of European contact [...] resulting in influences on religion, culture, and education. Kofi Agawu, 2003, p.3.

³ Christopher Waterman, 1991, p.179.

⁴ Kofi Agawu, 2003, p.62.

⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, 1983, p.12.

Additionally and more formally as defined by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) 'Traditional Cultural Expression' is a living body of knowledge that is 'constantly recreated as traditional artists and practitioners bring fresh perspectives to their work'.⁶ By innovation and creation tradition is sustained and passed on from generation to generation within a community, often forming part of its cultural or spiritual identity.⁷ Ga people refer to their commonly owned land as 'traditional land,' and to their governance structure and authority that has sustained them as a group as 'traditional councils' (defined in Chapter 3).

In order to realign my study I undertook early research after becoming familiar with calls by African scholars to 'Build on the Indigenous'.⁸ Unfortunately, the term 'Indigenous' also proved to be an equally controversial term in Africa, where it appears to have taken on multiple, politically contingent meanings. The Ghanaian Cultural Policy adopted in 2004 does not affirm legitimacy or indigenous status for any of its fifty plus ethnic groups.⁹

Groups have consistently migrated throughout Africa, and Ga arrived as migrant groups in what is now known as the Accra Plain, Ghana, between the twelfth and the fifteenth century, and acknowledge the Guan people as the earlier settlers.

Given that Ga people refer to themselves as indigenous people along with many of their customs and practices,¹⁰ the term 'indigenous' is addressed here, outlined by a UN Resolution adopted by General Assembly on the 13th September 2007.¹¹

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their

⁶ <www.wipo.int/freepublications/en/tk/913/wipo_pub_913.pdf> [Accessed May 2013]

⁷ www.wipo.int/pressroom/en/briefs/tk_ip.html [Accessed May 2013]

⁸ Claude Ake, (1990); Bethwell Allan Ogot, (1995. ed. Odhiambo 2002); Elisha Stephen Atieno Odhiambo, (2002).

⁹ <www.artsinafrica.com/uploads/2011/04/Ghana.pdf> [Assessed November 2013].

¹⁰ The term indigenous and traditional were used interchangeably throughout interviews by culture bearers.

¹¹ 61/295. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system.

The historic origins of the occupants of the Accra plain are defined in chapter three of this dissertation, along with aspects of their social practices, religion, values, beliefs, governance, and communication systems.

Broadly, the research strives to examine interdependencies of Ga and their performance practices in social and religious communication, for the purpose of cohesion and solidarity towards improvements in 'community' life. Ga inhabit 'six major settlements',¹² which Ga people describe as 'traditional areas', and where they have maintained six governance structures, that they call 'traditional councils'.¹³ Each traditional council comprises of the descendants of clan or lineage elders of the original migrant settlers. These lineage groups created districts known (by Ga people) as quarters (*akutsei*) of the towns. These quarters constitute and define communities for the purpose of this study (further defined in chapter three).

My research accords with the concept now current which finds that colonialism has produced a complex musical society,¹⁴ currently influenced by neo-colonial development, globalisation, and a National Culture politically created after independence.

The term 'development' is an equally vague term and hard to pin down. It has been described as an ongoing dynamic process that 'creates new by destroying [or replacing] old'.¹⁵ The process of externally influenced development started during colonisation with the breaking down of various forms of authority, under which development occurred through 'traditional social order and beliefs' known as the 'culture' of the society.¹⁶ This breaking down of culture introduced an entry point at a subordinate level for the colonised to serve the master coloniser. The materialistic footprint left by

¹² Irene Odotei, 2008, *Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon. Paper presented to visiting students from the US at Department of Social Work, UG, Legon, (January 11, 2008)*< <http://irenekodotei.org/content/history-ghana>> [Accessed 2013/14].

¹³ Ga-Dangme consist of two related peoples. The Ga Traditional areas including their Council's are east to west, Ga Mashie, Osu, La, Teshie, Nungua and Tema. The Dangme include the people of Krobo, Ningo, Kpone and Prampram.

¹⁴ As defined in footnote 2.

¹⁵ Susanne Schech, and Jane Haggis, 2000, .p.2.

¹⁶ Schech, and Haggis, 2000, p. 4.

the colonisers cleared the path for post-colonial development, promising 'material progress and improved living standards.'¹⁷

Today's international development policies are 'captured in a seductive mix of Buzzwords' such as 'participation', 'empowerment' and 'poverty reduction'.¹⁸ Participation is a term used in international development by policy makers to evoke the notion that everyone has a voice and a choice, and the use of the word gives legitimacy with the 'laudable aim of enabling poor people.'¹⁹ In reality, development buzzwords are often renegotiated in local situations and transformed to provide alternative and multiple meanings. When I use the term 'participation' in this dissertation I refer to my goal to promote active meaningful inclusion in activities.

For the purpose of this study, I do not refer to development interventions and promises from external sources,²⁰ but rather development is defined as the utilisation of community 'dialogue that leads to collective problem identification,²¹ decision making and community-based implementation of solutions to local development issues.'²²

Culture is at the heart of identity and 'forms part of the common heritage of mankind':²³

It is culture that gives 'man the ability to reflect upon himself. It is culture that makes us specifically human, rational beings, endowed with a critical judgement and a sense of moral commitment. It is through culture that we discern values and make choices, and through culture that man expresses himself, becomes aware of himself, recognizes his incompleteness, questions his own achievements, seeks untiringly for new meanings and creates works through which he transcends his limitations.'²⁴

Culture was officially defined by UNESCO at the World Conference on Cultural Policies, Mexico City, 06 August 1982 as follows:²⁵

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 15.

¹⁸ Andrea Cornwall, and Karen Brock, 2005, p. 1044.

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 1055.

²⁰ By governments, institutions, NGO's.

²¹ Community is organised around lineage quarters (*akutsei*) as defined on p.3.

²² Jan Servaes, 2008, Communication for Social Change (CFSC), 2006, P. 15.

²³ Cited from UNESCO - World Conference on Cultural Policies, Mexico City, 26 July - 6 August 1982
<http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/files/12762/11295421661mexico_en.pdf/mexico_en.pdf>
[Accessed 20 May 2013].

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

Culture [...] is [...] the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or social group. It includes not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions, and beliefs.

As such, culture is never static as people have the ability to absorb new concepts of modernity, whilst adopting philosophies that fit with their moral values. In Ghana, the cultural policy is dedicated to 'the promotion of unity in diversity,' to respect and represent the 'fifty ethnic groups whose common values and institutions' are represented by the nation.²⁶

In a development process culture allows dialogue and reflection, providing opportunity for decision making, and to collectively identify solutions to issues of importance within the culture. The breaking down of such a process by the colonial authorities was achieved and implemented across a 'large part of the world by white middle-class-men', who presented themselves and European culture as the 'epitome of modernity'.²⁷ In Accra this perception resonates in contemporary society, amounting to a vision of an imagined European utopia culture, fused with the notion of a National Ghanaian Culture, invented after independence.

In the context of 'development', every issue needs a process of communication to inform or 'produce change',²⁸ making the 'socio-cultural system in which the media operates of paramount importance'²⁹ to the success, or otherwise, of the communication process. My observation of performance interaction in local situations amongst Ga people has identified a communication process, in which performers (musicians, dancers, storytellers), and audience all participate, providing opportunity for participants to use their 'memories, emotions, imaginations, thinking of their past, in the present, from where they can invent their future,'³⁰ and explore ways of addressing their needs. By contrast in the field of globalised mass media (radio, television, mobile phone technology, and the internet) as employed in Ghana, I have observed a tendency towards 'the dissemination of messages ['sender to receiver'] that encourage the public

²⁶ The Cultural Policy of Ghana, 2004. National Commission on Culture.
<http://www.artsinafrica.com/uploads/2011/04/Ghana.pdf> [Accessed 2013/14].

²⁷ Schech, and Haggis, 2000, p. 18.

²⁸ Jan Servaes, 2008, p.15.

²⁹ Kwasi Ansu-Kyeremeh, 2005, p.19.

³⁰ Augusto Boal, 1992, p. 5.

to support 'development-oriented' ideas devised by outside (i.e. Western) agencies.³¹ Such a communication process denies dialogue and reflection, or the opportunity for collective decision making.

In this study, the term 'local communication systems' (LCS) identifies the process of communication using performance genres, of which some are pre-colonial and others are the result of dynamic cultural development. Some scholars 'employ the term 'indigenous' [occurring in] as distinct from 'endogenous' [the nature of] to distinguish media systems of non-Western culture'³² from Western mass-media. Wang and Dissananyake used the term indigenous communication systems 'to avoid the confusion caused by the terms 'folk media' and 'traditional media.'³³ Whilst scholars Jussawala and Hughes also employed the term indigenous communication systems to denote communication channels that are 'embedded within [the] traditional mores of the people, contributing significantly to their history and culture.'³⁴

From the perspective of Africa, Ugboajah uses the term 'man-media, oramedia,'³⁵ in addition to 'folk media, traditional media, informal media and indigenous media.'³⁶ Conscious of all these terms, the study will use Local Communication Systems, (LCS) to avoid confusion of terms.

1.2. Ethnomusicology

In 2008, I read an article which caught my interest in 'The Guardian' newspaper written by ethnomusicologist Angela Impey, who was working in 'applied ethnomusicology' and using music as a tool for development.³⁷ In her article, Impey describes ethnomusicologists as believing 'music to be a potent communication system that provides a particularly important voice in situations where other forms of expression may be prohibited or considered emotionally inadequate'.

Impey describes ethnomusicology as:

³¹ Servaes, 1996, p.20.

³² Wang and Dissananyake, (1984); Jussawala and Hughes, (1984); and Ugboajah, (1985c);

³³ Ansu-Kyeremeh, 2005, p.16.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Oramedia is defined as 'grounded in indigenous culture produced and consumed by members of a group.' Ugboajah, (1985c).ed. Ansu-Kyeremeh, 2005.

³⁶ Ugboajah, (1986) ed. Ansu-Kyeremeh, 2007. p. 17.

³⁷ Angela Impey, The Sound of Development, 2008.

<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/katineblog/2008/apr/02/therhythmofdevelopment> > [Accessed 20 September 2011].

the study of music in its social and cultural contexts. It is a study that links musical practices and their meanings to a broad range of related concerns: oral history, social and economic practices, religion, gender, health, local knowledge systems, to name a few.³⁸

Impey's article led me to explore the work of ethnomusicologists and ethnomusicology as a study of music in its 'cultural and social context,' from the perspective of 'applied' ethnomusicology. Ethnomusicologists, affirms Bruno Nettl, are 'interested in music as a component of culture,'³⁹ a segment or part-of culture.

Since the 1950s, many ethnomusicology scholars have applied anthropological techniques in their field research, resulting in works by scholars such as Alan Merriam, John Blacking, and Alan Lomax,⁴⁰ described by Nettl as now taking on 'the status of 'old' and maybe even 'obsolete literature.'⁴¹ The discipline, as it develops, is not without its disputes. In the period between '1950 and 1970' explains Nettl, there was a tendency for ethnomusicologists 'to divide themselves into two groups, frequently at odds, one concentrating on the music 'itself', the other on the cultural context.' Such discourse continue to resonate in what may eventually be resolved as a discipline with multiple strands, similar to the strands of Anthropology.

All data collected during field research by ethnomusicologists is 'bound in a time-frame,'⁴² marked by a particular time and frozen in socio-political history. Additionally, field-research reflects the challenges, privileges, struggles, and the socio-political background of the researcher in the 'interpretation of transcultural musical forms,'⁴³ and their meanings. A challenge described by Edward Said as 'the almost insuperable contradiction between a political actuality based on force, and scientific and human desire to understand the 'Other' hermeneutically and sympathetically in modes not influenced by force.'⁴⁴

John Blacking lived in South Africa for fifteen years, after studying anthropology at Cambridge, but spent only twenty-two months during 1956-

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Bruno Nettl, 2005, p.8.

⁴⁰ Merriam's *Anthropology of Music* (1964); Lomax's *Folk song styles and Culture* (1968); Blacking's *How Musical in Man* (1973).

⁴¹ Bruno Nettl, 2006, p. xi.

⁴² Keith Howard, 2005, p.32-33.

⁴³ Jaco Kruger, 2005, p.39.

⁴⁴ Edward Said, 1993, .p.66.

1958 in the field, with the Venda people, and 'was prevented from returning after his expulsion from South Africa.'⁴⁵ His 'exemplary fieldwork'⁴⁶ with the Venda was used for the rest of his career, but he never revisited. 'Consequently, he has been criticised for assuming a static stance on culture.'⁴⁷ But as globalisation proceeds and all societies become more interconnected the research of ethnomusicologists in a particular political and social time-frame will provide a valuable resource to add knowledge to new field-research so that future ethnomusicologists expand their understanding of musical societies. Therefore, can such work ever be 'obsolete'?

In the 1980s there were studies of African music which represented Africa as one-and-all-the-same: 'African Music,' or 'African Rhythm,' the entire Continent's music and its people being described as 'essentially rhythmic people, and Africans as different from 'us'- [...] Euro-Americans.'⁴⁸ These assumptions about African rhythm or African drumming, without historical or geographical context, continue to permeate African music education in Euro-America,⁴⁹ and a simple internet search will demonstrate the hundreds of 'African Drumming' opportunities available.

In his paper, 'The Invention of African Rhythm', Kofi Agawu sets out to show that the notion of a 'special disposition toward rhythm in African music is an invention of Western discourse.'⁵⁰ Such a discourse neglects the 'numerous repertoires of song and instrumental music that originate in specific African communities' across the Continent.⁵¹ These, asserts Agawu, are 'circulated mostly orally/aurally' and 'performed regularly, as part of play, ritual and worship across language, ethnic, and cultural boundaries.'⁵² The representation of the music of Africa by Euro-American scholars has created tension between scholars of African heritage and those of Euro-American descent within the academies. This debate lingers, as some African scholars such as Akin Euba now believe that 'ethnomusicology is unsuitable for African music studies,' and is in fact 'irrelevant to African culture.'⁵³ In his book 'Representing African Music,' Agawu makes the general assertion that

⁴⁵ Howard, 2005, p.33.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 32.

⁴⁷ Jaco Kruger, 2005, p.37.

⁴⁸ Agawu, 1995, p. 380. "The Invention of "African Rhythm", *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 48, No. 3, pp. 380-395.

⁴⁹ 2014.

⁵⁰ Agawu, 1995, p. 395

⁵¹ Agawu, 2003, p. xiv.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Agawu, 2003, p. xvii, cites, Euba, 2001, 137,139.

the Euro-American, study of African music, should meet African scholars, musicians, and culture bearers, on a level playing-field. For Agawu, says Erlmann, 'the future of African musical scholarship is not a question of conjuring up a new 'model' or of fixing what he considers to be a broken discipline. His is ultimately a denial of the fundamental premises of the ethno musicological project itself'.⁵⁴

Agawu, highlights the difficulties for musicologists in the African academies who face financial inequalities compared to their Euro-American counterparts, resulting in restricted access to the various journals, archives and publications.⁵⁵ Such material disparities impact on African scholarship as knowledge and debate becomes published and owned by the Euro-American societies and is not freely shared from the various Euro-American archives and repositories, although this knowledge is freely accessible within the Euro-American academies.

Veit Erlmann reminds us 'that many of Agawu's accusations ring awfully true. There is no denying that ethnomusicology has been largely supportive and reflective of colonial pursuits.'⁵⁶ Field-work is generally confined within colonial borders, and he advocates a broader approach. For example ethnic division goes beyond borders, and there is, says Agawu, 'an increasingly urgent need to think beyond borders' when considering ethnic groups.⁵⁷

Clearly, ethnomusicology is an evolving and somewhat contested discipline, with multiple strands, studying the world's music or its culture context or both. The knowledge produced by ethnomusicologists has varying agendas, carried out by people who have entered the academy from many strands of social-strata across the World with its varying social, economic, political systems. As a matter of underlying ethics of research it is clearly 'a dicey issue' as Agawu points out, who 'determines what is right and wrong? Good or bad for whom'?⁵⁸ Over many decades, the Euro-American profession has offended African scholars and professionals to the point where the Ethnomusicology project may need to explore all the moral, ethical and legal issues from Western and non-Western perspectives.

⁵⁴ Veit Erlmann, 2004, p.291-2.

⁵⁵ Agawu, 2003, p. 35.

⁵⁶ Erlmann, 2004, p. 291.

⁵⁷ Agawu, 2003, p. 29.

⁵⁸ Ibid. p.199.

Whilst the world is evolving at an ever increasing speed, divided by conflicting economic, social, religious, and political agendas, my study is framed by the modern urban capital of Accra, amongst people who have needed to juggle their identities to cope with alien cultures that have entered and transformed the physical fabric of their space, following their own logic and agenda.

1.3. Applied Ethnomusicology

In Ethnomusicology there is a tension described by Nettl between those who study the music itself and those who study music in its culture, whilst there is further tension between ethnomusicologists and applied ethnomusicologists, and applied ethnomusicology is extremely difficult to define. 'Academic conversation on the subject' says Rebecca Dirksen,⁵⁹ 'hails at least as far back as 1944, when Charles Seeger issued a call for the development of an 'applied musicology,' although many researchers were engaging in applied activities long before then.'⁶⁰ The term applied, was coined 'as a diacritical sign of anthropologist's intervention in the cultures he/she works with, in the 19th century, [by] British anthropologist L. Fox Pitt-Rivers.'⁶¹ However, 'the institutionalisation of applied anthropology as a subject in universities came in the 1920s, with Radcliffe-Brown's first courses under that heading at the University of Cape Town, South Africa'.⁶² As Samuel Araujo reminds us, this opened up a new job market 'to provide trained personnel to posts in the colonial administrations as a way of counterweighing difficulties, or even failures in public policies; in other words, political and administrative problems seen as related to ignorance of cultural differences between administrators and administrated peoples.'⁶³

American scholars often credited with laying the foundations of applied ethnomusicology are 'Francis Densmore, John and Alan Lomax, Bess Lomax Hawes, Benjamin Botkin and Charles Seeger',⁶⁴ who worked extensively in the field.⁶⁵ Anthony Seeger points out the 'distinction between theory and

⁵⁹ Rebecca Dirksen, < <http://ethnomusicologyreview.ucla.edu/journal/volume/17/piece/602>>. [Accessed Jan.2014].

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Samuel Araujo, 2008, p.15.

⁶² Ibid. p.16.

⁶³ Samuel Araujo, 2008, p. 16. also cited in Klisala Harrison, 2012. p.509.

⁶⁴ Charles 'Seeger was hired by the Resettlement Administration specifically to use music as a resource to bring communities together "around the project of economic and social self-help", Robert Cantwell, 1992, p.269.

⁶⁵ Dirksen. p. 6

practice has been increasingly challenged in the social sciences and within ethnomusicology' and he seeks to define the difference between applied and public ethnomusicology.⁶⁶ 'Applied,' he says, can mean teaching ethnomusicology in the universities and 'public ethnomusicology' he defines as takes place outside the university.⁶⁷ Although today many universities are seeking collaborations outside the universities, and within the public sector to facilitate academic/non-academic multidisciplinary research. 'More and more ethnomusicologists', says Seeger, 'see their future in becoming public activists and intellectuals'.⁶⁸ Therefore, 'public sector, commercial, and not-for-profit employers promise further divisions of social, cultural, and political valuation in applied ethnomusicology,'⁶⁹ in a variety of employment contexts.

The profession has growing numbers which Dirksen explains as being due to the rise in those being trained in the academies, 'exponentially more Ph.D.s have been awarded than there are academic positions,'⁷⁰ resulting in many ethnomusicologists competing for positions in the public sector. As more and more ethnomusicologists work in the public sector, the result might be 'a relative lack of academic debate surrounding research and representation of activities labelled 'applied',⁷¹ possibly due to what Dirksen describes as 'long-held tensions [...] and ingrained prejudices against matters perceived as a-theoretical'.⁷²

'A notable contribution to applied ethnomusicology development and theatre specialists is Paulo Freire's dialogic process.'⁷³ Many 'applied' scholars have, according to Dirksen, 'latched on to Freire's pedagogy privileging 'native' knowledge, educative action, and the dialogic process.'⁷⁴ a philosophy that resonates in the engaged and participatory action research employed by, among others, Samuel Araújo and Angela Impey.⁷⁵

Araújo has since 2003 maintained academic/non-academic collaborations between the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro Ethnomusicology

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ <<http://ethnomusicologyreview.ucla.edu/journal/volume/17/piece/582>> [accessed May 2014]. Video Lecture.

⁶⁸ Seeger. 2008, p. 272.

⁶⁹ Klisala, Harrison, 2012, p.514.

⁷⁰ Rebecca Dirksen, p. 8.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Dirksen, p.12. [Freire Paulo. 1985[1970].

⁷⁴ Freire Paulo, 1985[1970].

⁷⁵ Samuel Araújo and the Grupo Mucultura, (2006); and Angela Impey and the residents of KwaZulu-Natal (2002).

Laboratory, and local NGOs,⁷⁶ community organisations, schools, communities, and individuals in low income communities. The partnerships practice methods that are based on the principles of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire that 'divide between learning and knowing mediated by self-experienced research.'⁷⁷

Freire (1921-1997), has over a long timeframe, influenced many arts-related development projects, including the work of activist Augusto Boal, at '*Theater of the Oppressed*,' established in Brazil during the early 1970s. According to Boal, The *Aesthetics of the Oppressed* Forum Theatre 'makes people more capable of feeling (sensing) and at the same time understanding social reality'.⁷⁸ This is achieved by collective action in real life community matters.'⁷⁹

1.4. Ethical Considerations for Research

The applied ethnomusicologist in the academy, are provided with ethical guidance from their institution. Ethnomusicologists outside the academies working in the applied, public or practice based field enter agreements with employers or funders in a continuous employment context (including ethical issues), whilst making applications, designing, delivering, evaluating and reporting, rather than producing papers towards the knowledge of the discipline.

As Dirksen points out, 'striking a balance between the needs of the scholar and the needs of the community' and between artists in the rural and the urban setting, means applied ethnomusicologists need to 'consider finding this balance part of their ethical responsibility.'⁸⁰

The Association of Social Anthropologists in the UK and the Commonwealth has broad ethical guidelines, attuned to work in the field. These include individual responsibility, personal integrity, anticipation of harm,⁸¹ undue intrusion, informed consent, participants right to confidentiality and anonymity, fair return for assistance, participants intellectual property

⁷⁶ The Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Ethnomusicology Laboratory.

⁷⁷ Araujo, 2013, p. 40.

⁷⁸ Boal. An Essay By Augusto Boal. www.theatreoftheoppressed.org/ [Accessed January 2014].

⁷⁹ Sanjoy Ganguly, (2002) Jana Sanskriti Centre for Theatre of the Oppressed, West Bengal, India.

⁸⁰ Dirksen, p. 16.

⁸¹ The laws of the country the research originates from dictates certain precautionary measures for example health and safety and child protection.

rights, and participants involvement in research. Additionally in applied/public ethnomusicology, employment law requires ethical responsibility towards sponsors, funders and employers.⁸²

Pecuniary and materialist expectations in the field is an issue for all researchers in ethnomusicology whatever methodology they choose to use. Salaried, non-salaried, researchers, and scholars enjoying Euro-American institution salaried positions are cited by Agawu,⁸³ as creating an enormous division between Euro-American researchers and African scholars, musicologists, and culture bearers.⁸⁴ Fair return for assistance is an ethical issue, to avoid economic exploitation of individual informants, translators and research participants; fair recompense should be made for their help and services.⁸⁵ Material disparities in the real world, bring to light ethical issues, beyond the academy,⁸⁶ and a difficult balance must be struck between making a fair return and rendering the process commercial.

Additionally, applied ethnomusicologists have often assumed the role of culture brokers or assisting artists in recording and releasing their work as an income-generation activity. Music research increasingly demands that scholars be conversant with law, politics, intellectual property rights, cultural heritage protection, and the associated ethics. Seeger reminds us, says Titon,⁸⁷ 'that we would do well to consider interpretive discourse in the arena where it has the most obvious practical consequence: the law. Copyright is but one of several places that law impacts ethnomusicologists,' with the addition of a financial impact in favour of copyright owners.

1. 5. Research Methodology

Based on the considerations above, my research crosses the intersection of applied/public ethnomusicology, social/cultural anthropology, and communication by focusing on the 'numerous repertoires of song,' dance

⁸² Full guidance found in - Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and the Commonwealth Ethical Guidelines for Good Research Practice.

⁸³ Agawu, 2003, p. 32-33.

⁸⁴ Based in African academies there is a 'significant gap in earnings that separates African based scholars from their Euro-American counterparts. Agawu, 2003. p.33. Additionally material disparities mean that scholars, students and culture bearers in Africa do not have the financial resources to access the scholarly work and international music archives. Agawu, 2003.

⁸⁵ As fn. 86.

⁸⁶ Fair return would normally provide transportation and refreshments. On longer assignments local transport, a fair daily rate, local meal allowance and accommodation should be provided if necessary. These rates are not difficult to acquire by asking, and by the researcher using local facilities, transport and restaurant/cafes.

⁸⁷ Jeff Todd Titon, 1992, p. 318.

and storytelling used in urban Ga 'communities' across the Accra plain, 'circulated mostly orally/aurally' and 'performed regularly,'⁸⁸ as communication, in conjunction with Ga societies' activities.

My research involved engagement with Ga musicians, Ga community leaders (elders and heads of professional organisations) from the different Ga traditional councils and quarters, scholars, and elders. I found unstructured interviews and recorded conversations between participants the most appropriate method of data collection.⁸⁹ A set of questions might give me the answers I wanted, or even expected, but conversations often lead to the unexpected. To collect data of social and religious interaction I took photographs only with permission, as a cultural courtesy. I used video as little as possible as a tool for evaluation.⁹⁰ The video presented here is an assembly of the raw material only, and no enhancement or attempts to produce a media-type product have been applied to the video material.

The video collected is to support this dissertation and folio only, and no other usage permissions have been obtained.

There are two issues that limited my research:

- 1 The time allocated and finance needed in order to do justice to my research might require a period of 12 to 18 months spent in the field. I spent two months in the field with inadequate finance, and considering the depth of the project I consider this seriously inadequate. Therefore, this dissertation is an interim report of an ongoing project.
- 2 My lack of knowledge of the Ga language was an obstacle during research, which I negotiated through interpreters. The analysis of language constructed in song lyrics during the folio part of my research shows how the embedded literary devices affect the meaning of the messages transmitted, providing evidence that further in-depth research would be inadequate without partnership with a Ga-speaking musicologist and linguist.

⁸⁸ Agawu, 2003, p.204

⁸⁹ Recorded after consent was given.

⁹⁰ I find it difficult to determine what is happening for the benefit of the camera, as opposed to when a camera is absent.

Research methodology was guided by the literature used in conjunction with desk research on Ga society. Amongst these were Margaret Field's 1937/40 accounts of Ga society and structure,⁹¹ Irene Odotei's contemporary Ghanaian historical research (on-line), and Marion Kilson's *Kpele Lala*⁹² a study of Ga songs and narratives. Some of this is old research, but vital in the understanding of where those being researched are coming from, and essential to understand how changes have occurred over time. Research on the development of Ga music and dance during and after colonial occupation, as well as post-independence, was assisted by the publications of Professors Nketia, John Collins, Christopher Waterman, Kofi Agawu.⁹³

My primary contacts were; David Nii Amoo, Artistic Director at the National Dance Ensemble Accra; Professor John Collins, and Professor Nii Yartey, Director of Dance at the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon, Accra; additionally the members of Ga traditional councils.

The first period of research was during November/December 2012, followed by a second period in March/April 2013, which was truncated due to illness. I returned to complete field-research during the period of the Ga *Homowo* Festival, held in August, discussed in the folio.

Throughout field research, I kept a regular daily journal. Additionally, I used a laptop computer to download recorded media, as well as saving video files to an external hard drive. I also had two small cameras (a Canon D600 and Canon A720IS), both of which were capable of capturing video and stills and both small enough to be unobtrusive. I also carried, at all times, a very small Olympus (WS570M) digital recorder for interviews and recorded music, sometimes in poor quality.

All this technology needed an electricity supply for recharging, which in urban Accra was/is erratic. Added to this, field research was often challenged by exhaustion, as all but my final period (August) of research were the hottest months in Ghana, when the humidity is stifling.

⁹¹ Margaret. J Field, *Religion and Medicine of Ga People*, Oxford University Press, 1937, and *Social Organization of the Ga People*, (London: The Crown Agent for the Colonies, 1940.

⁹² Marion Kilson, *Kpele Lala: Ga Religious Songs and Symbols*, 1971.

⁹³ Professor J.H. Kwabena Nketia, (2010, 2005, 1990, 1979, 1977, 1959, 1958) John Collins, (2006,2004,1989, Christopher Waterman, (1990,1991) Kofi Agawu, (2003, 1995).

1.6. Research Goals

When I started my research, my primary goals were guided by a set of questions based on my desk-research. My original goals were redefined after my early research and modified to adapt and refine the terminology used.

Initial Goal

Original research 'Building on the Indigenous' defined 'Indigenous' as outlined by a UN Resolution as detailed above.

Modified Goals

Observe performance practices (music and dance) in social and religious communication, for the purpose of cohesion and solidarity towards improvements in 'community' life.

Observe how 'dialogue can lead to collective participation, problem identification, decision-making and community-based implementation of solutions of development issues. Therefore observe how collective communication takes place.

The final questions for the research became: How can communal knowledge embedded in song narratives, music, dance and performance be used in a process of communication for participatory action towards social and human development in Ga societies? How can the development priorities of local people be addressed, heard, and acted upon, through local communication systems?

By 'communication', I refer to the Local Communication Systems (LCS), outlined in 1.1, 'development' is also defined in 1.1, as is 'community' and 'participation'.

My research parameters and goals document the activities of storytelling, dance, songs and instrumental music that originate, or have been adopted by Ga, in their communities for the purpose of communicating oral knowledge that is dynamic, as described by Agawu.⁹⁴ By 'community', I refer to people and spaces defined in 1.1.

⁹⁴

Agawu, 2003. P.xiv.

1. 7. Field Study

I arrived in Accra for the first time on the evening of Friday the 2nd November 2012, where I had booked into a small hotel in the centre of the Ga fishing community in Usshertown, Old Accra. A short taxi journey from the airport followed the highway towards Accra, revealing an extremely modern city with all the trappings of western commercial dealerships. The taxi arrived at Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park and turned off the tarmac onto the sandy streets, leaving the street-lighting behind. The entire area was in darkness owing to a power-cut, with one exception: the Deliverance Church was glowing in the darkness, with generated lighting, and a powerful sound-system was broadcasting a live healing ceremony to the entire community.

My central location gave me easy access to the commercial centre, Arts Centre and National Theatre, as well as Ga communities in Usshertown, Bukom and Jamestown, collectively known as Ga Mashie.⁹⁵ I spent the weekend wandering the Ga markets, the fishing harbour, and residential areas, seeing and experiencing the two faces of Accra. The High Street runs east-west directly through the Ga communities of Ga Mashie. Lining the High Street are international banking centres, telecom companies, churches, two historic slave forts (Dutch and British), as well as the relics of an ex-colonial British business centre. Stepping off the High Street, to either side you enter the Ga residential areas, which reveal the social and economic realities of the Ga people, who do not appear to be benefiting from the economic boom visible elsewhere.

My initial perception of Accra, was how void of musical activity it appeared to be compared to other African capitals I have visited, where live music seems to permeate in every direction. I explored the Arts Centre, known also as the Centre for National Culture, where I found a warren of craft stalls. I chatted to a few of the young musicians who were offering drum or dance lessons, mostly the 1960s Ga drum dance, *Kpanlogo*. I was interested to find that when I asked them about their own musical background, they immediately produced the instruments from their own ethnic group, and were pleased to talk at length about their music and the dance stories. However, when I asked Ga musicians about their music, they told me the heritage of the whole of Ghana, with an emphasis on Ewe and Akan, (i.e.

⁹⁵ Ga Mashie is also spelled Ga Mashi and is used as the collective name for Jamestown, Usshertown and Bukom, the Ga settlements in central Accra.

non-Ga) and complained that the dances were not being taught properly at the University.

On the first working day, Monday, I met with my lead contact, David Nii Amoo, Artistic Director of the National Dance Ensemble, based at the National Theatre. During a preliminary interview, we discussed the Ga people and their performing arts. Similar conversations took place during the following days with Professor Nii Yartey, Director of Dance at the School of Performing Arts at the University in Legon, as well as Professor John Collins. There was a general view that the Ga people and their cultural expression were being overwhelmed by new influences from outside.

1. 8. Research Location and Demographics

The research is located in the Accra plain, which is the territory of Ga people, and consists of approximately fifty kilometres (east-west) along the Atlantic coast,⁹⁶ stretching northwards by approximately 40 kilometres to the foot of the Akuapem hills. In 1982, the area was incorporated into the Greater-Accra Region and occupies a total land surface of 3,245 square kilometres. The population of Accra was 4,010,054 in 2010, accounting for 15.4 per cent of the total population of Ghana, with mixed migrant groups from all over Ghana and neighbouring countries, who seek employment and some measure of economic security. Ga predominantly participate in fishing and fish trading and village activities include farming, where the urban spread has not yet encroached on the land.

Ga-Dangme are two groups of people (defined in chapter three),⁹⁷ who in 2012 made up 7.4% of Ghana's total population of 25,366,462,⁹⁸ i.e. over two million people, largely concentrated in the Greater Accra Region.

⁹⁶ From Lamgba in the West to the East of Tema Newtown.

⁹⁷ Ch.3. p.31.

⁹⁸ 2012-Ghana Population. <<http://countryeconomy.com/demography/population/ghana>> (Accessed May> 2013).

⁹⁸ Irene Odeti, <<http://irenekodotei.org/content/history-ghana>> (Accessed 2012/13/14).

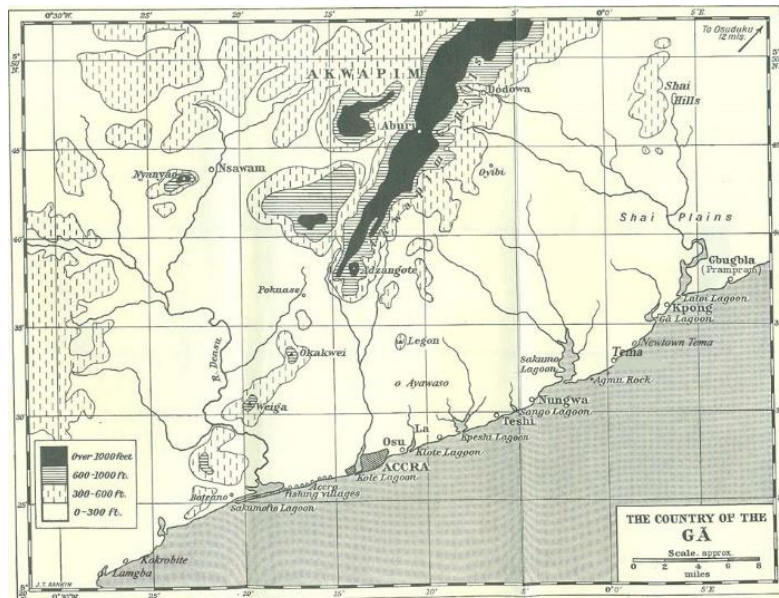


Plate. 1: Map 'The Country of the Ga', reprinted by permission of the Secretary to the Delegates of Oxford University Press. *The Religion and Medicine of the Ga*, Margaret J Field. 1938.⁹⁹

The Ga occupy six major coastal settlements which are Ga Mashie, (central Accra), Osu, La, Teshie, Nungua and Tema. The Dangme include the people of Krobo, Ningo, Kpone and Prampram in the east of the Accra Plain. Each of the six major Ga coastal settlement (as defined above) has a governance structure that Ga people call Traditional Councils. These councils also governs satellite villages and land (that Ga call 'traditional' land) stretching from the coastal settlements, to the northern boundary at the foot of the Akuapem hills. The six councils are collectively joined under the leadership of the Ga Manste, *Ga* Paramount Stool (Chieftaincy).¹⁰⁰ The Ga Chieftaincy is represented in the National Government by a Ministry of Chieftaincy and Traditional Affairs.

The outer fringes of Accra and Tema are experiencing rapid industrialisation and urbanisation. There is a heavy demand for land, much of which has been acquired by government for official headquarters, public services, buildings, roads and port authorities, whilst other land has been purchased by other means for business, private lifestyle and industrial purposes from local chiefs. According to the World Bank human development indicators, Ghana has reached medium development status.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Reprinted by permission of the Secretary to the Delegates of Oxford University Press. *From The Religion and Medicine of the Ga*, Margaret J Field (1938).

¹⁰⁰ Kilson, 1971, Field, 1937.

¹⁰¹ UNDP – Human Development Report. < <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries>>.

Chapter Two

The Ga Culture and Development

Many African cultures emerged through a very long process of change, maintained by 'oral histories'. This chapter explores some of the changes imposed on the Gold Coast during the colonial period and how foreign occupation continues to impact on the culture, including religion, values and identity.

2. 1. Culture in Development

Ga society has undergone dynamic cultural transformation due to colonial occupation and missionary activities from the fifteenth/sixteenth century to the mid twentieth century, as well as more recent 'mass commodification of the arts' and a global concept that attempts to 'reduce cultural expression to a state of entertainment.'¹⁰² However, says Franscois Matarasso, 'culture is far more than entertainment,'¹⁰³ in oral society the stories, songs and dances tell us about 'each other and ourselves,' assisting in a process of understanding our 'experiences our hopes, desires and fears,' as we 'build identity, that essential component of humanity and community.'¹⁰⁴ 'Development processes,' asserts Matarasso, 'which fail to recognize this, which simplistically divide people's resources from their aspirations, or their health from how they feel, struggle to produce lasting improvements in people's lives.'¹⁰⁵

The modern world has had 'an ambiguous relationship with culture during the past century'.¹⁰⁶ Seemingly, culture has been seen as a 'stumbling block to development,'¹⁰⁷ whilst recently there is an emerging interest in culture' from the perspective of global and economic development. The 'real assets of modern economy', says Charles Leadbeater, 'come out of our heads not out of the ground: these assets include ideas, knowledge, skills, talent and creativity.'¹⁰⁸ This, asserts Matarasso, presents an 'urgent need to rethink

¹⁰² Justice Stephen Kofi Gbolonyo, 2009, p.iv.

¹⁰³ Franscois Matarasso, 2001, Forward.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ Atieno Odhiambo, 2002, p. 1.

¹⁰⁸ Charles Leadbeater, (1999) *Living on Thin Air: The New Economy*, London, p. 18.

the role of culture' in light of the 'growing economic environment and social challenge of the new millennium'.¹⁰⁹

The very concept of 'development' implies change, and in a materialistic society economic development implies 'change for the better'.¹¹⁰ Globalisation, and commodification of sectors such as arts and culture, goes hand-in-hand with the development of the physical fabric of urban spaces. Cultural-zoning of 'specifically 'creative' places, are argued to be an important component of economic growth'.¹¹¹ For the music industry, if we consider the 'shift in thinking of music making' in the Western world since the nineteenth century, we see the industrial products movement from sheet music and acoustic instruments to facilitate the 'basis of active participation in music making,' as a social communal activity.¹¹² Today most music venues in the West use recorded music and DJs, whilst live and recorded music income streams have plummeted. Talented musicians are replaced by computer programmes, turning music production and ownership into industrial products. Today a small income is generated for copyright owners from streaming service providers, such as Spotify. One wonders how this will benefit the newly emerging Ghanaian 'Creative Industries' which are promoted politically as well as by the churches who invest heavily in gospel music.¹¹³

In an ideal world a culture-based bottom-up approach to 'development strategies enables new knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be introduced within the framework of existing knowledge, cultural patterns, institutions, values, and human resources.' 'Indeed', urges Nat Colletta, 'the 'indigenous' is the fabric within which development can be woven'.¹¹⁴ Such development initiatives as the 'Theatre of the Oppressed' in Rio de Janeiro, as I outlined in 1.3, enable 'local people in neighbourhoods and favelas to explore their own solutions to community problems,'¹¹⁵ using 'native' knowledge, educative action, and the dialogic process.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁹ Francois Matarasso, p. 4.

¹¹⁰ Ikeda, Sanford, 2011, p.2.

¹¹¹ Sarah Brookby, 2012, p. 1.

¹¹² Thomas Turino. 2008, P. 24

¹¹³ Abamfo Ofori Atiemo defines 'Gospel music in the Ghanaian context is not defined according to the beat or rhythm. It is the song-text that defines a particular piece of music as 'gospel''.2006.

¹¹⁴ Kidd, Ross and Nat Coletta, 1980. Tradition for Development: Indigenous Structures and Folk Media in Non-formal Education. Bonn: German Foundation for International Development. p. 17.

¹¹⁵ Francois Matarasso, 2001, p.8.

¹¹⁶ Feire, Paulo. 1985[1970].

2. 2. Colonial Ghana and the Performing Arts

By using the term 'colonial' I refer to the period of time from the arrival of Europeans on the Gold Coast (said to be the Portuguese in 1471), including the period after partition (1870s) when the Gold Coast became part of the British Empire, until Independence, which took place in 1957, when the Gold Coast was renamed Ghana, to honour African history and the old Empire of Ghana.

Europe had during the '1870s, 80s, and 90s'¹¹⁷ undergone a 'great flowering of European invented traditions,' including 'ecclesiastical, educational, military, republican [and] monarchical.' These inventions were 'deployed' in Africa, and drawn upon to 'define' and 'justify' the colonisers' role as a ruling class.¹¹⁸

Unlike India, 'Africa did not offer its conquerors the framework of an indigenous imperial state' with varying degrees of equality and inequality, that the colonisers were able to engage with. Rather, Africa offered dozens of kingships; hence the British made use of 'the idea of Imperial Monarchy'.¹¹⁹ 'The invented traditions which were introduced to Africans were those of governance rather than of production.'¹²⁰ Although as Terence Ranger points out that 'European invented traditions offered Africans a series of [...] points of entry into the colonial world', though these were offered at a level of 'man/master relationship.'¹²¹

The Art of Empire-building also included 'the introduction of the mission and colonial schools,'¹²² which started the construction 'of a new class of individuals exposed to aspects of European culture' which were 'superimposed on the local cultures.'¹²³ This education system produced the 'colonial and post-colonial personalities,'¹²⁴ scholars, and what Thomas Turino describes as the growth of 'Cosmopolitanism.'¹²⁵ Turino uses the 'term cosmopolitan to refer to objects, ideas, and cultural positions that are

¹¹⁷ Terrance Ranger, Hobsbawm. E and Terence O. Ranger. 1992, p.211.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Hobsbawm. E and Terence O. Ranger, 1992, Terence Ranger, p.212.

¹²⁰ Ranger, 2010, p. 454.

¹²¹ Hobsbawm. and. Ranger. 1992. Ranger.p.227.

¹²² Achimota School (formerly Prince of Wales College and School) was formally opened in 1927 by Sir Frederick Gordon Guggisberg, then Governor of the British Gold Coast colony, where many African leaders, including Kwame Nkrumah, Edward Akufo-Addo, Jerry John Rawlings, and John Evans Atta Mills (all are former Heads of State of Ghana) were educated.

¹²³ Hobsbawm. and. Ranger. 1992. Ranger.p.227.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Turino, 2000, p.7.

widely diffused throughout the world and yet are specific only to certain portions of the populations within given countries.’¹²⁶

Against this background of imposed and invented traditions, ‘Globalization’ could be said to have started during the 16th century or earlier in Ghana, where social transformations were constructed for the benefit of first trade, followed by colonial occupation and later neo colonial development.

Taking account of this history, Agawu asks us to consider the oral and aural world of a fictitious ‘young musician named Kwame,’ living in ‘Cape Coast, on the Gold Coast in 1920.’ Cape Coast was one of the earliest European import and export centres ‘for both human and material trade,’ as well as the ‘site of some of the earliest churches and schools’ built in Ghana.¹²⁷

Kwame was exposed to the sounds of ‘Castle bands and various town bands’ as well as ‘internalising some of the idiomatic expressions of military band music.’¹²⁸ He knows many ‘hymns from the Methodist Hymnal,’ and ‘he has been exposed to the music of *asafo* and *adowa* “traditional” ensembles. Whilst ‘occasionally he encounters guitar-playing seamen from Liberia,’ he also ‘frequently listens to songs sung by migrant Ga and Ewe fishermen.’¹²⁹

Technically, Kwame’s knowledge ‘registers diatonic as opposed chromatic melody,’¹³⁰ whilst he is ‘familiar with a number of rhythmic *topoi*, a set of distinctive and memorable rhythmic patterns associated with specific dances.’¹³¹ Finally:

Kwame’s idea of harmony is guided by a preference for consonance at phrase ends (unison, octaves, or thirds, usually, but also fourths and fifths) and a polyphonic feeling based on streams of parallel thirds (or maybe fourths based on what the Anlo-Ewe fishermen sing) and voice-crossing at cadences.¹³²

Additionally, Kwame has a ‘store of knowledge of European music’ marked by the aural European influences in his neighbourhood, personal

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Agawu. 2003, p. 7.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Whilst in Cape Coast Kwame registered diatonic, along the coast Ga musical preferences register pentatonic.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

preferences and difficulties such as ‘singing melodic – and harmonic – minor scale segments in a few of the hymns in church.’

These ‘western musical influences’ were ‘assimilated and utilised by the African musicians who fused [them] with their own tradition’ to create ‘palm-wine’ highlife; the colonial military brass-bands that became ‘*adaha*’ highlife; and the Christianised black dance-band highlife.’¹³³

The Cape Coast and along the Atlantic coast to Accra is not too different today to what it was in the 1920s as described by Agawu. The number of churches has multiplied where, in ‘Catholic and Anglican’ districts you hear ‘the intoning of psalms and singing of Gregorian chant in the original Latin,’ and along the street the ‘Presbyterian and Methodist’ hymns are similar to those heard by Kwame, whilst predominantly the charismatic Pentecostal churches produce music that is ‘loud, rhythmically alive, geared to the present, and devoid of the fake solemnity of the ‘higher,’ orthodox churches.’¹³⁴ This ‘gearing to the present’ is associated with the ethnic specific music included in church services that encourages congregations to drum, dance and sing during the sermon.

2.3. Pre-independence and independence periods in Ghana

During the pre-independence and independence period, new African leaders used the performing arts as a decolonisation tool to engage with communities. The new African states championed the function of the arts, leading to the ‘revival of African clothes, food, music and dance’.¹³⁵ Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana’s first leader and later President supported and engaged with the people’s cultural expressions, establishing ‘many state sponsored local popular music and drama groups linked to state organisations and hotels’.¹³⁶

J. H. Kwabena Nketia was Nkrumah’s cultural advisor, after being appointed as Research Fellow in the African Studies department at the University of Ghana in 1952. Nketia is not only a prolific scholar, but also wielded the most influence over the performance sectors in Ghana, and how it is seen across the world, as Director of the National Ensemble and, in 1962, Director

¹³³ John Collins, 1989, p.222.

¹³⁴ Agawu, 2003, p.8.

¹³⁵ Bethwell Alan Ogot, 2002, p. 47. Originally delivered at a public lecture given at Kisumu, Kenya. 1977.

¹³⁶ Collins, 2006, Abstract.

of a School of Music, Dance and Drama, established as part of the Institute of African Studies at the University. Soon after independence Nketia turned his attention to 'fashioning out a Cultural Policy document for Ghana' a 'maiden policy' not adopted by his government.¹³⁷

After attending the World Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar [April 1966], Nketia was exposed to 'performing groups from all over Africa [...] seeing for the first time the differences as well as the similarities.'¹³⁸

Then the concept of Africa as a multiple, rather than as a single thing, struck me. Every time we had that kind of African festival I was struck by this and it seemed that we needed a way of dealing with that and making sense of things that were different. [...] It became important, when we were setting up a [Ghanaian National] Dance company. Guinea and other places had taken people who were already experienced, knowledgeable about their own dance forms and they would [each] come in little groups and perform for ten minutes, something from their own place. We told Nkrumah,¹³⁹ we wanted to do it differently and we were going to train our dancers [in different traditions and styles] instead of just picking already formed dances.¹⁴⁰

During an interview with Nketia, Trevor Wiggins asked, so 'very consciously setting out to provide focus for a national identity rather than a place where all the different groups come together?'¹⁴¹ 'Right' says Nketia, 'doing it that way and giving them the opportunity of learning dances from other places meant that we were creating new Ghanaians.'¹⁴²

Nketia's idea was to choreograph a theatrical repertoire from Ghana's traditional dances, by working together with his friend and colleague Professor Albert Mawere Opoku, who had been appointed as Artistic Director at the National Ensemble.¹⁴³ 'The primary aim was to establish a program of 'national dances' that would be representative of the cultural wealth of all the diverse ethnic groups in Ghana,'¹⁴⁴ therefore, starting the

¹³⁷ The Cultural Policy of Ghana, 2004. National Commission on Culture. <<http://www.artsinafrica.com/uploads/2011/04/Ghana.pdf>>.

¹³⁸ Trevor Wiggins, and J.H Kwabena Nketia, 2005, p. 69.

¹³⁹ Nkrumah was deposed by coup 21st February, 1966.

¹⁴⁰ Wiggins, and Nketia, 2005, p. 69.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Both Nketia and Opoku were scholars of the grammar of Akan ceremonial and performance sectors.

¹⁴⁴ Katharina Schramm, 2000, p.349.

process of creating a National Culture. Selections were made to narrow down and standardise the companies' repertoire to include '*Kpanlogo*,¹⁴⁵ *Adowa*, *Atsiagbekor*, *Bawa* and *Damba Takai*.'¹⁴⁶ 'The result would be the establishment of a trans-ethnic canon, a classic collection of cultural artefacts,¹⁴⁷ for presentation and entertainment at 'public concerts' to a 'non-participating, [paying] audience.'¹⁴⁸ The process removed the dances from their 'primordial sources' the 'markers of African difference',¹⁴⁹ resulting in various elements of the 'group's choreographic arrangements now being understood to be part of the indigenous tradition.'¹⁵⁰

'This invention of tradition engendered a range of responses,' asserts Agawu:¹⁵¹

On one hand, traditional culture was understood as a rebirth through a kind of *Sankofa* ('go back and retrieve') philosophy. On the other, traditional culture was interpreted as new, as the result of fresh initiatives that, although marked by a thematic relation to 'old' or Rural Africa, nevertheless represented bold new ventures. Herein lies the paradoxes of post-colonial African life.¹⁵²

Even today these dances are perpetuated by repetition and now take on the status of traditional. By dividing the cultural expression from the culture and commodifying the presentation a question arises. Who owns the rights to Ghanaian national music and dance?

2. 4. Post-Colonial Culture in Ga Development

'Highly-educated Africans,' says Coplan,¹⁵³ 'for the past century [...] considered popular traditional music embarrassingly pre-modern and ethnically differentiating for their own ideological self-image.' Within the communities in Ghana, colonialism had 'left a residual legacy of negative attitudes towards indigenous cultures and a wholesale denial of self-worth

¹⁴⁵ A 1960s drum dance, invented by Ga musicians from '*Oge*' (Liberian Music) and '*Kolomashi*' Ga processional music.

¹⁴⁶ Agawu, 2003, p. 19.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Katharina Schramm, 2000, p.346.

¹⁵¹ Agawu. 2003, p. 19.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ David B Coplan, 1985, p.118

that undermines the acceptance of traditional performing arts along with the rituals and ceremonies associated with them.’¹⁵⁴ This is the state of affairs that I found during field research, with the addition of an official National Culture which appears to confuse the issues of identity even further for the Ga.

During my interview with Nii Yartey, he set the context of culture amongst the Ga people:

Culture is dynamic [and] maybe we [...] need to think about what that dynamism is. It is like the breath that we take, it changes every time an ethnic group interacts with another group; it’s always there. As the Ga are the unique occupants of the city of Accra, their geographic location means that they have had contact with people from everywhere.¹⁵⁵

Nketia describes Ghanaian musicians as possessing ‘bi-musicality’ as a result of the colonial musical impact: however, he further asserts that they also easily ‘assimilate other cultures.’¹⁵⁶ ‘Many contemporary dance groups’ says Nketia ‘have emerged following Opoku’s way of choreographing, but I find this is the case perhaps more in Accra than other places’.¹⁵⁷

Many scholarly accounts of Ga society claim that the Ga have borrowed from neighbouring ethnic groups and that Ga culture is an amalgam of borrowed traditions and institutions. Although this borrowing was not raised as a question, Nii Yartey addressed the issue during an interview:

For the Ga it’s like we are the only people who don’t have something that belongs to us. If we refer to the Ashanti, they are seen as the epitome of what culture is, although they have borrowed so much, not always by the normal process of borrowing, but by coercion and force.¹⁵⁸

Nketia defines ‘community music-making’ as: ‘traditional’ community activities amongst people who generally belong to the same ethnic or linguistic group,’ and are practiced during communal activities¹⁵⁹ I asked Nii

¹⁵⁴ Frances Nii-Yartey, 2011, p. 282-3.

¹⁵⁵ Professor F Nii Yartey, 3rd April Legon, WS750109.

¹⁵⁶ Wiggins, and Nketia. 2005. p. 70.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Professor F Nii Yartey, – 3rd April Legon, WS750109.

¹⁵⁹ Nketia, 1979. p. 21.

Yartey if communal music-making is a practice in Ga communities: 'here in Accra', he said, 'music for community activities has gone':

We need a paradigm shift; we need to find new usage for these things. They used to play and everybody heard and they all took part, [but] now young people have things they stick in their ears to listen to music. With their little machines they can't hear their mama, they can't hear their friends, and they are locked into their own world.¹⁶⁰

The philosophy of the Ga includes an acceptance of people to come amongst them, asserts Nii Yartey, 'we say *Ablekuma aba kuma wo*', may strangers come to settle among us, we welcomed people with open arms'.¹⁶¹ However:

Right now the dynamism has shifted. It's a two-prong change.' The first 'is the philosophy or the world view of the people' and secondly it's 'the kinds of people who have come amongst us' including 'the mind with which these people have come. The values that these people have brought to the domain of the Ga people have all sought to create a different culture for the Ga.'¹⁶²

These different strands, stressed Nii Yartey, 'are two major issues for the agenda of any serious researcher.'¹⁶³

Whilst the Ga worldview has assisted in the marginalisation of the majority of Ga people by sharing their assets, the minority elite in Ga society are causing further marginalisation by the assimilation of colonial values at the expense of the majority. As Turino demonstrates the 'black middle class, have real cultural effects on the ground':¹⁶⁴

Modernist ideology militated against the so-called traditional, that is, the various indigenous alternatives to modernity and capitalism-precisely by redundantly projecting them as a primitive past.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ Professor F Nii Yartey, – 3rd April Legon, WS750109.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Professor F Nii Yartey, – 3rd April Legon, WS750109.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Thomas Turino, 2000, p. 7.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

2. 5. The Colonial Legacy: Identity

I found in the field a complex set of circumstances, creative processes, society structures and identities. Additionally, Accra, like other African capital cities, experiences high levels of migration for economic and employment opportunities, making Accra a multi-cultural metropolis of almost five million people. Ga people in their urban environment are not unlike other oral societies in such a milieu, who, as described by Louise Bourgault, maintain their wisdom and knowledge 'not housed in libraries, but stored in the memories of human beings who pass down the history, stories, religious knowledge, prayers, rituals, and the moral values of society without recourse to written records.'¹⁶⁶ Although many Ga have converted to Christianity or Islam, I noted that rituals are still believed in, practised, and observed.

In Accra, I found a vocabulary of words rarely used in Europe, such as the word 'civilised', which was slipped into most conversations in many contexts. For example, 'when we are civilised', 'we weren't civilised' [before the Europeans], 'it's not civilised', and countless more which could signal an insult by saying 'he's not civilised', or imply praise, or refer to some form of utopia that must be achieved. I realised through this and similar vocabulary the extent to which the colonisers had infiltrated the population in order to re-civilise them in the Western model. I found people in the 'process of becoming rather than being: not 'who [they] are' or 'where [they] come from', so much as what [they] might become, how [they] have been represented and how that bears on how [they] might represent [them]selves.'¹⁶⁷ Hall's statement bears reference to the influences that outside and inside forces have imposed on identities, and how people represent themselves. I found this not only in the Ga vocabulary, but also during conversation with Fante and Ewe people.

Accra has a small elite, upwardly-mobile cosmopolitan population, in enclaves around Victoriaborg, the former exclusive colonial British residential neighbourhood, as well as parts of Osu, and East Legon. Here in the luxurious gated communities the 'international-set', diplomats, development agency executives, international NGOs, hang-out in a café culture that replicates the former colonial decadence. This is where the new 'creative industries' are shared and grow 'facilitated [by] alliances between

¹⁶⁶ Louise M. Bourgault, 2003, p. 109.

¹⁶⁷ Jenks Okwori, 2002, p. 149. cites, Hall and Du Gay, 1996, p.4.

members of this class and white liberals, missionaries, foreign government and NGO officials, and other 'foreign experts'.¹⁶⁸ Whilst the majority of the four million plus people in Accra earn less than a survival level of income, largely in the informal sectors.

The social realities and inequalities that I found in the field (taking account of Ghana's colonial past), brings Freire's finding to life. 'The very structure of their thought has been conditioned by the contradictions of the concrete, existential situation by which they were shaped.'¹⁶⁹

2.6. Conclusion

Culture-in-development is defined as an 'essential component of humanity and community'.¹⁷⁰ There is a growing economic challenge shaping culture towards the 'creative industries' and the emergence of culture as a trade commodity for development. However, as pointed out by Turino, Ranger, Hobsbawm, Schech and Haggis,¹⁷¹ culture has changed so dynamically as a result of invented traditions, colonisation, and the post-independence invention of a national culture, one now wonders if, or how, there could be anything of value produced by the creative industries, or the whole project is illusory?

Chapter Three

3. 1. Introduction

The first inhabitants of the land that became known as the Gold Coast are said to be the Guan, who include the 'Larteh, Efutu, Awutu and Gonja',¹⁷² Carl Reindorf records that 'the aboriginal race all along the sea coast and inland at some points 15 [to] 40 miles were nearly all of the Guan Kyerepong,

¹⁶⁸ Turino, 2000, p.11.

¹⁶⁹ Paulo Freire, 1985[1970], p.45.

¹⁷⁰ Francois Matarasso, 2001 p. 4.

¹⁷¹ Diop, Samba, 2012, Terrance Ranger, Hobsbawm, E. 1992, Ranger.1983. Hobsbawm, 1983, Schech, Susanne and Jane Haggis, 2000.

¹⁷² Irene Odotei, 2008, *Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon.*

Paper presented to visiting students from the US at Department of Social Work, UG, Legon, (January 11, 2008), <<http://irenekodotei.org/content/history-ghana>>.

Le and Ahanta tribes speaking different dialects of the Ahanta, Obutu, Kyerepong, Late (LE), and Kpesi languages.’¹⁷³

The Ga-Adanme arrived in the Accra plain in several waves of migration by land and sea in lineage groups, settling amongst the aboriginal people in scattered settlements, and organising themselves in major and minor lineages, each with their own god. Amongst the gods would be ‘a senior god for the whole group. The priests (*wulomo*) of the supreme gods were the leaders of the groups. For example, the *Las* were under the leadership of the *Lakpa Wulomo* (priest).’¹⁷⁴ The Ga, asserts Odotei, ‘are a complex mixture of people and cultures [who] have gradually fused into a society with distinct characteristics’.¹⁷⁵

The Ga settled in the west of the Accra Plain leaving the Adanme to inhabit and build towns such as ‘Kpone, Prampram, Ningo, Ada, Osudoku, Shai, Yilo and Manya Krobo’¹⁷⁶ in the east. Ga-Dangme, therefore, comprise two peoples, the Ga, and Adanme collectively known as Ga-Dangme, united by the Kwa language.¹⁷⁷

Historians have varying accounts of the origins of the Ga-Dangme, amongst these are Israel, Egypt and Mesopotamia,¹⁷⁸ whilst Reindorf,¹⁷⁹ maintains that the Ga originated from Benin,¹⁸⁰ a theory later accepted by Ward and Field.¹⁸¹ Whatever their origins, archaeological evidence indicates,¹⁸² and oral history narrates, that Ga arrived between the 12th and the 15th century in the Accra Plain, from locations now known as the modern Republics of Benin, Nigeria, and Togo. There are substantial Ga-Dangme communities in modern Togo and the Volta region of Ghana; these include the people of Anecho and Little Popo.

¹⁷³ Carl Christian Reindorf, *History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti* (Basel 1895), p. 7.
<http://archive.org/stream/historyofgoldcoa00rein/historyofgoldcoa00rein_djvu.txt>.

¹⁷⁴ Odotei., Thesis, Introduction. <<http://irenekodotei.org/content/introduction>>.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Kwa language is part of the Niger–Congo family. It is very closely related to Adangme, and together they form the Ga–Dangme branch within Kwa.

¹⁷⁸ J.M. Bruce Myers: ‘The Origin of the Gas’ *Journal of the African Society*, Vol. XXVII 1927-28 E.A. Ammah: History of the Ga (unpublished)

¹⁷⁹ Reindorf, pp.3-4, 32.

¹⁸⁰ According to Odotei, ‘Reindorf’s hypothesis appears to have also been influenced by the view of F.L. Romer, a Danish writer of the eighteenth century. He suggested that there was once an empire of Benin, vaster than the empire of China, which stretched from the River Niger to the River Gambia, and was said to have incorporated the Ga’. <<http://irenekodotei.org/content/introduction>>

¹⁸¹ W.E.F. Ward: 1967 p. 57. M.J. Field: 1940) p.121.

¹⁸² Odotei, < <http://irenekodotei.org/content/introduction>> cites P. Ozanne: Ladoku; an early town near Prampram. *Ghana Notes and Queries*, No.7 (June 1965) Pg6. ‘Archaeological excavation made in Ladoku, (an abandoned settlement of the Las), distinctive pottery indicated the presence of a small village or group of farmsteads dating back to 1200-1400’.

Oral history provides evidence that the Ga people in Nungwa came from Tetetutu (Togo/Benin) in the east with the first party of Ga Mashie people,¹⁸³ who are said to have arrived from 'Benin City in Eastern Nigeria,' the people in Osu trace their affiliations to 'Osudoku in the Adanme area,' whilst La people along with some of the people of Teshie arrived from 'Boni.' Ga of Tema 'say they were originally known as the *Kpeshi* tribe from 'Ayigbe' and came from the east.¹⁸⁴ The '*Kpeshi* of Tema and other Guan groups are said to be among the earliest groups to live in the Accra plains'.¹⁸⁵ These complications, difficult for outsiders to master, at least give some idea of how Ga people conceive their identity.

In order to assert themselves on the Accra Plain the lineage groups, organised by King *Ayi Kushi*, and his son 'Prince *Ajite*, [...] marched with all the *Akras*, *Obutus*, and a *Tshi* prince, to Ayawaso, and [...] established a capital on the hill known as Okaikoi or Kplagon (Legon).¹⁸⁶ The major lineage groups found today in contemporary Accra (Ga-Mashie) settled during the sixteenth century around Ayawaso, which became the Ga inland Kingdom.

In the organisation of the coastal settlement, each group incorporated inland villages into their governance structure. Therefore, village people will say, 'we are Teshi people', or 'we are Osu people'.¹⁸⁷ In contemporary society, inland villages continue to be governed by one of the six traditional councils. From west to east these councils are: Ga Mashie (Central Accra incorporating Jamestown, Usshertown, and Bukom), Osu (Christiansborg), La (Labadi), Teshie, Nungwa and Tema.¹⁸⁸ Each of these towns is divided into *Akutsei* or quarters, to represent the original lineage groups, and each *Akutso* (*singular of Akutsei*) is sub-divided into *Wei* or patrilineal houses. Ga Mashie has seven *Akutsei*, each with its own *Mantse* (Chief), whereas the *Akutsei* of the other Ga towns do not have separate *Mantsemei'* (plural of *Mantse*),¹⁸⁹ although they do have a single *Mantse* for each traditional council. Ga boundaries are shared with the 'Akwapim and Akyem (Akan), in the north, the Awutu (Guan) and Fante (Akan) in the west, and in the east with the Adangbe, to whom they are said to be closely related.'¹⁹⁰

¹⁸³ Margaret Field, 1937, p.25.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. p.10.

¹⁸⁵ Odotei, 1991, p. 61.

¹⁸⁶ Reindorf, 1895, p. 4.

¹⁸⁷ Field, 1937, p. 2.

¹⁸⁸ The boundaries between these towns extend northwards, for example Teshie has indigenous land that incorporates fifty-three inland villages stretching to the foot of the Akwapin hills.

¹⁸⁹ Odotei, <<http://irenekodotei.org/content/introduction>>.

¹⁹⁰ Irene K. Odotei, External Influences on Ga Society and Culture, Research Review NS Vol. 7 Nos 1 & 2. 1991, p. 61.

Since the fifteenth century,¹⁹¹ until today, the Ga coast has experienced an influx of European immigrants, and contemporary Ga culture has been shaped by 'intensive and lengthy interactions of Ga-speaking peoples with representatives of other cultures.'¹⁹²

3.2. Ga Social Structure

The most important social unit in Ga society is the family: Irene Odotei and Margaret Field characterise Ga kinship as patrilineal,¹⁹³ whilst Marion Kilson considers it 'cognatic,' and Barbara Hampton asserts that ¹⁹⁴ Ga people 'trace clan affiliation rights patrilineally, inheritance rights cognatically, and residence rights bilaterally.'

In Ga traditional society the basic unit is the *we*. A *we* is an ancestral house to which all those who trace descent through the male line of a common ancestor belong. It was in the *we* that a child is welcomed into the world through the custom of *Kpojiemo* (out-dooring), marriage transactions are made and members are laid in state and the last rites performed.¹⁹⁵

Ga culture is polygamous, so the family unit comprises a husband, one or more wives and their children. As *we* family members increased, an annex would be built close to the original *we*. Ga continue this traditional practice in contemporary society. The system forms the socio-political structure 'grounded in lineage systems, based on the ritual obligations between members of the same extended lineage or clan, who are all descended from a common ancestor.'¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ In 1471, the first Europeans, the Portuguese, arrived in the gold producing regions of West Africa. They obtained so much gold in the areas between the rivers Ankobra and Volta that they named it 'La Mina', the Mine. <<http://www.icye.dk/data/media/qhananp.pdf>> [Accessed 7 April 2013].

¹⁹² Marion Kilson, Kpele Lala, Ga Religious Songs and Symbols. Oxford University Press. London. 1970. p.47.

¹⁹³ Margaret J. Field, Religion and medicine of the Ga people. Oxford University Press. 1937.

¹⁹⁴ Barbara Hampton, 1978, p. 35-36.

¹⁹⁵ Odotei, 1991, p.63.

¹⁹⁶ John Collins, African Musical Symbolism In Contemporary Perspective (Roots, Rhythms and Relativity). 2004, p.155/6.



Plate 2: Krobo Sackey We, Jamestown

Ga believe that land and property belong to both the living and their ancestors. Therefore, the original family unit is maintained and many of the *we* are decorated with the name of the original *we* founder over the door.

When the migrant lineage groups arrived in the Accra plain they brought with them their own shrines, gods, and ancestors who also reside in the *we*. Additionally, heads of families and other important *we* members were buried beneath the family house. For this reason Ga families are attached to their ancestral *we*, which contains the original shrines, family gods, ancestors, and graves within the inner compound.¹⁹⁷

A cluster of *we* known as '*akutsei*, a quarter,' make up the various lineage groups, (communities), royal families and king makers.¹⁹⁸ The quarters of '*Asere, Abola, Gbese, Sempe, Otublohum*,¹⁹⁹ and *Akumajay*,' now found in Accra (each with its own chief) are said 'to have started as *wei* [plural of *we*] in the earliest Ga settlement of the inland kingdom Ayawaso'.²⁰⁰

The chief, the spiritual leader (priest *wulomo*) clan head, the heads of the various houses, professional groups notably the head of farming, *Okwaafiatse*, and the head of fishing, *Woleiatse*, clan captains, *asafoiatsemei*²⁰¹ and *asafoianyemei*, govern the traditional areas. This system has recently experienced difficulties due to succession disputes amongst lineage elders of the various quarters, in various towns.

3. 3. The Religion and Beliefs of the Ga People

Ga perceive themselves as distinct from other ethnic groups, a distinction Kilson defines as 'epitomised by the *kple* cult.'²⁰² It is through *Kple* worship

¹⁹⁷ This system is experiencing difficulties due to Ga quarters occupying land suitable for tourism.

¹⁹⁸ Odotei., Thesis, Introduction. <<http://irenekodotei.org/content/introduction>>.

¹⁹⁹ Otublohum, quarter adopted a community of Afro-Brazilian people who were returned slaves in 1836. Mensah, 2013. p. 33.

²⁰⁰ THE RISE OF AYAWASO, - <<http://gadangmenikasemoasafo.wordpress.com/the-king-taki-tawiah-memorial-lectures/lecture-ii-the-rise-of-ayawaso/>> [accessed February 2014].

²⁰¹ Daniel Osabu-Kle, 2008.

²⁰² Kilson 1971. p. 18. Kilson defines *Kple* as a cult.

that the Ga religious music survives and is performed during ritual, social and ceremonial activities.

Kple worshipers believe in the existence of a Supreme God, *Ataa Naa Nyongmo*, who created the world, and has both masculine and feminine properties.²⁰³ The Supreme God is accessible only through intermediaries, not directly. *Kple* like other 'African polytheistic faiths, consists of pantheons of demigods [assistants of the supreme].'²⁰⁴ The hierarchy of 'spiritual intermediaries, with their varying degrees of power, allow mankind to contact the divine in three main ways: through ancestors, through [lesser gods] and through nature spirits.'²⁰⁵

There is a concept of trinity in the *Kple* faith, as the sky god, *Nwei*, is considered a male and the earth goddess, *Shikpong*, is female. The marriage between the two 'resulted in the birth of the sea, *Nsho*',²⁰⁶ whose sacred day is Tuesday when the sea is closed for fishing, a practice continued in contemporary society.



Plate 3: Wulomo. Anumansa Division, Jamestown.

Ga governance, as stated, was originally 'absolute theocracies,' the only ruler being the *wulomo* (chief priest).²⁰⁷ 'Attached to the service of the gods are women known as *woyei*.'²⁰⁸ *Woyei* (singular *woyo*) are mediums who from time to time become possessed by the gods and deliver messages from them. The process of possession of the *Woyei* by the gods is the root of a complex knowledge system that uses music and dance to communicate.

²⁰³ There are variations of the spelling of *Kple*, Marion Kilson spells *Kpele*, whilst Barbara Hampton used *Kple*.

²⁰⁴ Collins, 2004, p. 105.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Osabu-Kle, 2008, <<http://carleton.ca/africanstudies/wp-content/uploads/Ga-People-and-Homowo-Festival.pdf>> [Accessed Dec 2012].

²⁰⁷ Field, 1937, p. 4.

²⁰⁸ Ibid. p.8.

Chief Nii Kweikuma IV was the spokesman of the *wulomo* at the Anumansa Division,²⁰⁹ Jamestown who, during my interview, outlined the *wulomo's* role in contemporary communities:

The *wulomo* is the spiritual head of the community: he supervises the spiritual life, and the fetish priests and priestesses cooperate under his guidance. The difference is that the *wulomo*, [...] does not do spiritual consultation, but his lifestyle and existence is holy, as is his environment.²¹⁰

The concept of death amongst the Ga is life-affirming, and death is a cycle of progression. Ancestor worship is one of the 'cornerstones' of the Ga belief system, where 'the dead act as spiritual lobbyists for their living kin, and the older the ancestor the more supernatural weight he or she carries.'²¹¹

Although some Ga have converted to other religions which they practice simultaneously, for numerous reasons Kple beliefs described above are upheld by most Ga people, and the *wulomo* is a highly respected member of the community.

3. 4. Evolution of Governance

The arrival of Europeans (15th and 16th Centuries) 'added new dimensions to the economic life of the Ga and tested relationships with their neighbours.'²¹² In their geographic position and with their welcoming world-view,²¹³ the Ga sought to take a dominant role in the newly emerging trade.

The founders of Ayawaso, the capital and trading centre organised themselves around key Ga Mashie quarters, asserting Ga authority across the Accra plains to establish themselves at the inland kingdom of Ayawaso. It is thought that several towns were founded by the Ga alongside Ayawaso, and the population was supported by thriving guilds of artisans including blacksmiths as well as traders, merchants, farmers, salt-makers and fishermen.

²⁰⁹ Wulomei do not generally communicate with public enquiries or give interviews without a linguist.

²¹⁰ Chief Nii Kweikuma IV, Interview 23rd November 2012, Jamestown. WS750038.

²¹¹ Collins, 2004, p. 106.

²¹² Odotei, 1991, p.6.

²¹³ As defined by Nii Yartey 'Ablekuma aba kuma wo'. Professor F Nii Yartey – 3rd April 2013. Legon WS750109.

Ga Mashie emerged as a powerful state by the 16th Century, and during the 17th Century, asserts Ogot, the Ga kingdom reached its peak of 'power under the King Okai Akwei (c.1640-77).'²¹⁴ Ayawaso was situated at the crossroads of an important trading route to the gold-bearing regions of the interior.²¹⁵

Through their organisation, Ga maintained their position as the Europeans' primary contact in the trade of gold and slaves on the Gold Coast.²¹⁶ This situation continued until a 'free trade' policy was 'changed to a protectionist system in the seventeenth century,' forcing 'inland traders to sell their goods in exchange for European manufactured goods.'²¹⁷ This economic change brought the Ga into conflict with their northern neighbours, the Akwamu, who in 1677 'defeated the Ga'.²¹⁸

Changes in their leadership were necessary: as Barbara Hampton asserts, a 'supernatural sanctions involved in the death of a *wulomo* necessitated the physical separation of the religious and secular heads when it became apparent that *wulomei* would be required to go to war'.²¹⁹ Gradually, to avoid violation of the sacredness of the priest, and especially when the seat of government was removed from Ayawaso to Little Accra on the coast, the two powers were separated. It is said that during and after this time Ga slowly adopted the role of Chief, sharing secular and material power between the *wulomo* and chief respectively.

The southern part of the 'Republique du Togo,' asserts Odotei, 'became an asylum for the Ga-Dangme whenever they were disturbed or threatened in the Accra plains,'²²⁰ and many Ga migrated to Togo after the 1677 conflict.

The inland population took protection around the coastal lodges and forts that the Kings of Accra had permitted to be built by Europeans.²²¹ This move enlarged what had been formerly known as Little Accra, into the largest Ga settlement of Ga-Mashie, Accra.

²¹⁴ Ogot, 1992. p. 211. (abridged).

²¹⁵ See Map page 19.

²¹⁶ British were given land by the King of Accra to build James Fort (Ga Mashie) in 1672, as were the Danish Fort Christiansborg in Osu, and Dutch Ussher Fort close to James Fort in Usshertown.

²¹⁷ Odotei, 1991, p. 61.

²¹⁸ The Akwamu was a state set up by the Akan people in Ghana which existed in the 17th century and 18th century. The Akwamu led an expansionist empire in the 16th and 17th century.

²¹⁹ Hampton, 1978, P.42.

²²⁰ Odotei. Ch.VI. <<http://irenekodotei.org/content/chapter-vi>>

²²¹ Fort James British trading post Jamestown, (1673), Dutch Fort Crêvecœur (1649), Usshertown, and the Danish Fort Christiansborg, Osu, (1652).

The trade in slaves had ‘steadily replaced the trade in natural products’²²² instead of exporting goods, which would have stimulated existing industries and the creative labour force, including skilled artisans, craftsmen and artists. Europeans exported only ‘cheap mass-consumer goods thereby killing existing industries or seriously retarding their growth.’²²³

In 1964-65, Kilson recorded and translated two hundred and forty-three *Kple* songs, which she published in 1971. These document some of the oral histories associated with Ga dynamic development in ‘dramatic forms, including song, dance, music, prayer and sacrifice.’²²⁴ The feelings of the Ga towards their dwindling population are illustrated in the *Kple* song below.²²⁵

Ani Lomo be mo kwaraa?
Aha Lomobii fee
Nyeha Lomobii blublu
Oshi Adu Kome, lomo be moko kwraa
Aha Buadzabii fee;
Naa, Buadza be mo.
Ahu komebii fee:
Kome be mo kwaraa.
Nyeha Dodebii fee;
Naa Dode be mo;
Aha Dodebii fee;
Naa nye ha Nkranpong fee;
Nye ha folio eha Nkranpong fee;
Wo Atsimbii ameha Nkranpong fee
Eta
Ameha Nkranpong blublu;
Mua Nkranpong be mo.

Does man have anyone at all?
 They snatched all man’s children;
 You snatched all man’s children;
 You snatched all man’s children;
 Skumo, man has no one at all.
 They snatched all Olila’s children;

²²² Ogot, 1992, p. 410. (Not abridged)

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Kilson, 1971, p. 24.

²²⁵ Ibid. p. 258-259.

Lo, Olila has no one.
 They snatched all Sakumo's children
 They snatched all Sakumo's children;
 Sakumo has no one at all.
 You snatched all Dode's children;
 Lo, Dode has no one.
 They snatched all Dode's children;
 Lo, you snatched all Great Accra.
 Our Akims have snatched all Great Accra;
 It is finished.
 You let uncircumcised people snatch all Great Accra;²²⁶
 They snatched all the people of Accra;
 So Accra has no one.

According to Kilson, the above text refers to the Akwamu destruction of Great Accra (Ayawaso) in 1677. 'Since the Ga have been routed, the gods and ancestors have no one to honour them.'²²⁷

'In short', asserts Ogot, from '1500 to 1800 there was economic growth in Lower Guinea [i.e. West Africa including Ghana] without economic development'. Moreover, 'since Europe controlled import and export, she kept most of the profit. Herein lie the roots of the process of underdevelopment, aggravated in the 19th Century by the abolition of the slave trade and the establishment of colonialism' in the Gold Coast.'²²⁸

In 1874, the British declared the Gold Coast a crown colony, incorporating more than one hundred ethnic groups and languages into a single boundary. The capital of the colony was at Cape Coast, until it was transferred to Accra in 1877. This move brought 'Ga into a new phase of development.'²²⁹

We are dealing in books.
 The European
 Has brought stories.
 We are dealing in books.
 We are dealing in books.
 The European

²²⁶ The reference to uncircumcised people is to intruders who are not Ga people, as it is customary that 'Ga males are circumcised in infancy or certainly before puberty.' Kilson, 1971, p. 227.

²²⁷ Kilson, 1971, p. 259.

²²⁸ Ogot. 1992, p. 410 (Not Abridged).

²²⁹ Odotei 1991, p. 62.

Has brought stories.

We went, we did not understand; we came, we did not understand.²³⁰

3.5. Conclusion

This outline is necessary to understand the complexity of Ga religious and social music associated with the various lineage and clan groups, and to further understand the evolution of the society and the governance structure, including the institution of the chieftaincy. It shows that the Ga in the Accra plains have witnessed intensive commercial activities that have created social and political upheavals, and, says Odotei, it is 'remarkable that they have managed to maintain their identity as a group.'²³¹

Independence brought intense development, which included the eviction of Ga people from their settlements in Tema (*Toman*), when a national harbour and industrial area was constructed on the site in the early 1960s, and all harbour-related employment was transferred from the colonial port of Accra to Tema.

Chapter Four

Ga Religious and Ceremonial Music and Dance

Here I will identify the different musical styles that Ga brought with them during their migration, in the context of worship. Additionally, how when Ga were forced to adapt their governance (outlined in 3.4) by adopting the chieftaincy they also built onto the performance arts in order to deal with the necessary changes in society. I will also outline observations that I made during field-research about how Ga use their music and performance during worship, and how contemporary external influences are continuing to create yet another a new culture for the Ga.

²³⁰

Kilson, 1971, Kple song 194. p. 269. 'The song is about the advent of European languages in Accra'.

²³¹

Odotei, 1991, p.70.

4. 1. Ga Religious Music

The music and dance called *Kple* is Ga religious musical form, performed to honour the gods, ancestors and deities in the context of worship. During research I discovered that *Kple* is the music and songs used to store and record Ga oral knowledge. Nketia asserts that Ga report to him that '*Kple* songs, contain all our wisdom, philosophy, history, and our knowledge of biology'.²³²

Through the evolution of Ga society and the dynamic nature of their cultural development, Ga have inherited new ideologies, ritual practices and gods. The rhythm-patterns that represent the various gods and their music use a pentatonic scale and are as follows:

1. ***Kple***. The gods worshipped with drumming, singing (pentatonic) and dancing of the type called *kple*, are those that preside over much of the spiritual, ritual and ceremonial activity of each Ga community.²³³ In Nungwa, the drum *Tele* is treated as a god, according to Field who asserts it 'is the only example I know of a fetish in *Kple* worship'.²³⁴ It is beaten so that its voice may call upon *Gbobu* (the god) when rain, better crops, or more fish are needed.
2. ***Me***. The gods worshipped with songs and dance to the '*Me*' type of music are of Adangme origin, found in Osu where Adangme arrived with the colonists from Osudoku in the Shai Hills. The Shai and the Krobo gods are all *Me* dancing gods, who are also associated with the *Otofu* rites for marriageable girls.
3. ***Kpa***. The *Kpa* singing and dancing gods in La and Teshie are described by Field as late arrivals from Bonni in Nigeria.²³⁵

Oral history narrates the story in a song:

The Las realized en route that they had left behind the gong-gong of La *kpa*, their principal deity. Fortunately for them, it was said that when they reached the river Nsaki, a monkey appeared who started dancing according to the beat of the La *kpa* music. They therefore followed the monkey and copied

²³² Nketia, 2010, p.37.

²³³ DVD. Tk, 1. *Kple & Kplejoo* Festival dances of the Woyo.

²³⁴ Field, 1937, p. 27.

²³⁵ DVD. TK. 2. Kpa Group Songs-Teshie & Tk. 1. CD – Examples of *Mbraku* never changes chanting-type song/rhythm, followed by *Kpafio* used in other songs including *Kpa shimo*.

the rhythmic movements until they were able to do the *kpa* dance without the gong-gong.²³⁶

Tee Nsaki naa
Yana kua dzo
Na ko eko da

I reached the bank of Nsaki
 I saw a monkey dancing
 I haven't seen such a sight before.²³⁷

The absence of the gong-gong in the modern *kpa* dance is observed as follows:

Ogbe midzi et miifo y Laa
O o b mli

Ogbe's three drums are sounding (crying) in La.
 A gong-gong is missing.²³⁸

4. ***Otu and Akon.*** Gods whose worshippers use the *Otu* and *Akon* types of dancing and music are of Fante and Akwapim origin respectively. 'The *Otu* cult dance of the Fante' was according to Nii Yartey 'purchased by Ga people to help in times of war'.²³⁹

As described above *kple* is Ga religious music, whilst *me* type is the religious music of the Adangme people who had settled in the region. *Kpa* music has influences brought from Nigeria, whilst the adopted music and dances of the Fante and Akan groups are *Otu* and *Akon*. Each has its 'own style and repertoire of drumming, singing and dancing'.²⁴⁰

4.2. Ga Festivals

Ga have two annual festivals. *Kpeledzoo* takes place in March or April in Tema when the rains begin to assist the germination of newly-planted corn.

²³⁶ Odotei, - <http://irenekodotei.org/content/introduction>.

²³⁷ Ibid. Oral tradition and *kpa* song given by Ankpa, an old woman of Labadi.

²³⁸ Ibid. *Kpa* song given by Nii Anyetei Kwakwaranya II, Mantse of Labadi.

²³⁹ Nii Yartey, 2011, p.285.

²⁴⁰ Nketia, 2010, p. 25.

The tilling of the ground and corn-planting amongst the Ga is marked by ceremonies at sacred locations. *Kpeledzoo* is associated with fertility during various ceremonies for people, plants and animals.

The *Homowo* Festival is considered to be the main Ga Festival, which is held in each of the six Ga towns on consecutive weekends in August through to September. The festival includes ritual and ceremonial activities based on oral histories, and has religious and social significance for the entire Ga group.

Homowo is held during the harvest period and is said to mean making-fun of hunger, as oral history narrates that a serious drought caused a famine that resulted in the death of many Ga people. The celebration marks the new-year for the Ga and includes rituals and purification ceremonies, as well as cleaning and repairing activities throughout the Ga communities across the Accra plain. During *Homowo*, families are reunited as they return to their *we* from different towns and/or from abroad.

Prior to their *Homowo* celebration, each town traditional council calls a ban on drumming and noise-making for a period of thirty days.²⁴¹ This throws the areas into complete silence and is a rule also observed by everyone, including the many recently established churches in the Accra plain.

In Accra, the celebrations start at *Odadaa*, the lifting of the ban on drumming and noise making. *Odadaa* is celebrated when ‘the priests (*Wulomo*) complete a ritual of prayer, and ‘the Gbese *Mantse* (chief) beats the sacred drum’ to ‘lift the ban on drumming and noise-making.’²⁴²

The sacred drums are brought from the shrine once in a year during the *odadaa* celebration. The two sacred drums are called *Tweneboah* (*Entandrophragma*) and are alleged to be a male and female drum which are quickly carried away to their shrine just after being beaten by the Gbese chief. Immediately the ban is lifted, there is euphoria [...], making the whole scenario one of absolute jubilation.²⁴³

During my research I learned about a tradition in Tema, during the *Kpeledzoo* festival, called *Kpelejoo*, and in other Ga towns during *Homowo*, where songs

²⁴¹ According to Samuel Nortey - The concept of this thirty day ban on drumming and noise making is biblical. According to the various priests of the Ga, the book of Habakkuk 2: 20 in the Old Testament states “The Lord is in his Holy Temple, Let all the earth keep silence before him” (Crossway Bibles, 2001). 2012, p.11.

²⁴² Samuel Nortey, 2012. p.11. <www.iiste.org>. [accessed March 2014].

²⁴³ Ibid. p.12.

are composed to expose wrongs or celebrate success of ‘the nobility and commoners alike [...] with the view of making them change their behaviour for the better.’²⁴⁴

In Teshie, the songs are written and performed during *Homowo* by *Kpa* groups. Asafoatse Aboadoni told me²⁴⁵ ‘every year we compose songs that expose wrong-doers, and promote people when they have done a good thing through *Kpa shimo* songs.’ So who is it I asked that decides who to expose and/or promote?

In all the towns there are age factions [elders], in different quarters,²⁴⁶ therefore if quarter A is here, and Madam from C comes and steals in quarter A, we all know that this woman is a thief; either they will compose a song or they will go and tell quarter C that this woman is a thief, so compose a song against her. In the old days they would come to your house, lift you up and put you on their shoulders and move you around the area, so that everyone will know that it is you they are singing against. So you will not commit the same crime again. Now because of the law, human rights say we are not allowed to do that.²⁴⁷

Kpa shimo is only sung during *Homowo*, ‘if you sing it after *Homowo* the person who you sing against can take you to court, but during *Homowo* you are given immunity, even the president can be insulted.’²⁴⁸

I asked Aboadoni who composed the songs, and was told each quarter has a *Kpa* group for the quarter (community) or village, ‘the *Kpa* group go into a room and say for example that a woman stole a fowl’ they will say ‘so let us come out and sing about her’, and when they have ‘composed and they know everything is good they will teach the whole group, before they will come out to sing it.’²⁴⁹

The *Kpa* groups use two musical types:

1. ***Mbraku*** never changes. It is a chanting-type song/rhythm.

²⁴⁴ Osabu-Kle, [Ga People and Homowo Festival - Carleton University](http://www2.carleton.ca/africanstudies/.../Ga-People-and-Homowo-Festival.pdf) <www2.carleton.ca/africanstudies/.../Ga-People-and-Homowo-Festival.pdf> [Accessed November 2011]

²⁴⁵ Asafoatse Aboadoni, (Teshie) 4th December 2012. National Theatre Accra. WS750062.

²⁴⁶ Quarters are made up of lineage groups headed by the elders. Each quarter has its own *Kpa* group.

²⁴⁷ Asafoatse Aboadoni (Teshie) 4th December 2012. National Theatre Accra. WS750062.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

2. **Kpafio** is the type used to create *Kpa shimo* songs that expose or promote community members.²⁵⁰

I engaged with the Teshie *Kpa* groups during the research for the Folio presentation three weeks before they were due to perform at the Homowo festival. My interest was in the narrative and transmission, and to observe how they engaged and were received in the community.

During the preparation in April for the spring *Kpeledzoo* festival in Tema I followed the development of *Kpelejo* songs produced by community groups with a similar intention as *Kpa shimo*. During the evenings for three weeks before the festival, community (*Kpelejo*) groups meet after the day's work in the various quarters. Songs are produced to expose wrong doers, as well as praise high-achievers. A panel of judges selects the winners who receive a prize.

I was informed by Cephas Mensah²⁵¹ that 'often, the victims of these songs join the group and sing the song that has been composed against them, as a sign of acknowledgement.'²⁵² Also, to avoid public humiliation and ridicule, when an individual realises that a *Kpelejo* group has composed a song about him or her, he/she tries to intervene by paying money and Schnapps (for libation) to prevent the group from singing the song in public. The decision to sing the song or not rests with the leadership of the particular *Kpelejo* group and his quarter, when they consider the gravity of the issue raised in their song. 'Groups' I was told, 'can make money this way.' Individuals that are praised through songs 'are expected to pay money for the privilege as a form of appreciation.'²⁵³

The songs that I observed being presented at the 2013 *Kpeledzoo* festival included a song that narrates the oral history about the Ga who settled in modern day Togo amongst the Ewe people, where they had transported and settled their god. When they migrated from the region to the Accra plain, they attempted to bring the god with them, but were prevented from doing so by the speed of the Ewe canoes, who succeeded in keeping the god in Togo.

²⁵⁰ CD – Examples of **Mbraku** never changes chanting-type song/rhythm, followed by **Kpafio** used in other songs including *Kpa shimo*.

²⁵¹ Cephas Mensah is the youth co-coordinator for the Tema Traditional Council.

²⁵² Mensah by email.

²⁵³ *ibid*.

Another song addressed the settlement of the long-running chieftaincy dispute in Tema after years of legal proceedings. A meeting between the chief and President John Mahama during the 2012 election campaign (December 2012) was also referred to in the lyrics of the song.

Further to this, a group of fishermen drew attention in their song to the fact that they have to pay a bribe to purchase fuel for their fishing canoes from the fishermen's union. Another group had a song that asked the traditional council to respect the *wulomo* by giving him a piece of land.²⁵⁴ Finally, a group of traditionalist fishermen addressed the chief and *wulomo* as follows:

We are not going to church.
We are celebrating with our ancestors.
We don't go for praying.
We celebrate with the ancestors.
We are going to drink *Apateshi* with the ancestors.²⁵⁵

These were some of the songs the *Kpelejoo* groups addressed in a spirit of renewal during the *Kpeledzoo* festival 2013.

As demonstrated by both the *Kpelejoo* and the *Kpa shimo (Folio) groups* the themes of the songs are presented by groups that represent the quarters of the towns, representative of the ancestral lineage (quarter). Therefore the activities of both the *Kpelejoo* and the *Kpa shimo Kpa* groups represent the feelings of each community.

4. 3. Ga Instruments

The instruments used to produce religious and social music are tuned drums and idiophones. The drums are of various sizes, and carved from the wood of the *Tweneboa*, literally translated it means Drum Tree. The drum-heads are antelope skin attached to the drum with rope and pegs. The skins are not cured and are taken direct from the animal carcass and put onto the drum. The drum-heads are tensioned by knocking the pegs into the drum until it produces the required sound or pitch. Drums are of different sizes and shapes that dictate the sound that they produce, similarly the idiophone

²⁵⁴ The *Wulomo* in Tema has recently been installed in his position.

²⁵⁵ DVD. Tk. 1. Kpledzoo Campaign.
Apateshi is distilled palm wine, made illegal during the British occupation.

(bells-*Nono*) are produced in various sizes to give different tonal quality.



Plate 4: Drum-maker, Kaneshie.



Plate 5: Attaching the ropes.



Plate 6: Securing the head.

In a social or recreational context there are often three drummers (lead and two support) who play by hand or stick, with the addition of two gong-gong players marking time. Rattles, marakashes, claves, and/or a double-headed drum, may contribute to the overall sound.

4. 4. Evolution of Music for Traditional Governance

Ga songs use a pentatonic scale, which is the scale traditionally used by *Ga* and the *Adangme* people. However, the music *Ga* absorbed from external sources uses the heptatonic, although I found pentatonic used in both ritual and contemporary social music in the communities.

When the role of *mantse* (*chief*) was introduced, the heavy court drums called *Obonu* by *Ga*, and talking-drums (*atumpan*) found in the court of the *Akan* (known as *Fontomfrom* by the *Akan*) were adopted by the courts of the *Ga*. When I visited the *Manste* in Jamestown, George Nii Oto Nelson, the lead-drummer for the Jamestown court, described how the drums are arranged in pairs to represent a female and male, with the male being slightly larger than the female drum.²⁵⁶ The drums are tuned to enable a call-and-response mode between the pair. The *Obonu* drum and



Plate 7: *Obonu* and *atumpan* in Jamestown.

²⁵⁶

George Nii Oto Nelson, Interview 5th December 2012, Mantse *Ga* Mashie. WS750067.

dance also served to provide additional support for the chief in his role as commander of the military .²⁵⁷ Today the drums have a ceremonial use when a chief is present during durbars and festivals.²⁵⁸

The additional roles of military captain *asafoiatse* (male war captain) and *asafoianye* (female war captain) were created, or superimposed over an existing warrior organisation, when the military needed to be strengthened during a period of unrest whilst competing with Akan groups for trade relations with Europeans. According to Anshan Li, 'the *asafo* company was originally a military organisation, and had its own 'flag, song, drums, horns, caps, emblems and its own post, the rallying place of the company, where all its paraphernalia were kept.'²⁵⁹ The *afaso* was led by the *asafoiatse* in each quarter of the towns, which had its own fetish, medicines, and priests.'²⁶⁰

Barbara Hampton records the following account,²⁶¹ 'the Akwamu showed them, [the Ga], how to 'make stools to take to war'.

It is ancient. It can't stop because it started long ago. *Adowa* and *obonu* and *asafo*-they are all ancient. They are as old as Okaikoi²⁶² and that name is not changed. *Obonu* and *asafo* and *adowa*-they all came from Okaikoi's hill.²⁶³

The members of *Dzosisi* we told Margaret Field: 'A stool is like a banner, the spirit in the stool goes into the man who sits on the stool [chief] and he can never be a coward and his warriors can never be cowards.'²⁶⁴

Adowa women's groups, whose music and songs are heard as a social music performed at funerals in contemporary society, owe their origins to the *asafo* tradition. According to Barbara Hampton, *adowa* was once the name of a company of women, who were auxiliary to the *asafo*, and 'the *adowa* is

²⁵⁷ Field, 1940, p.144. Hampton notes: (49) Kumasi followed the same plan, but at a later date, as Wilks suggests. The ascendancy eventually gained by Kumasi, coupled with the fact that it adopted the Akwamu military structure, may explain why the origin of the Ga institutions is erroneously attributed to Kumasi. The presence of the Twi dialect of Akan in some Ga *adowa* songs is probably due to recent interaction between the Ashanti and Ga (i.e., after both had established and developed *adowa*).

²⁵⁸ DVD. Tk. 3. *Obonu* Drum & Dance.

²⁵⁹ Anshan Li, – *Afaso and Destoolment*, in *Colonial Southern Ghana, 1900-1953*. Among the Akan people, the warrior organization known as *asafo* is found in almost every town or village.

²⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 329.

²⁶¹ Hampton, 1978, p. 41.

²⁶² "Okaikoi's Hill" is at Ayawaso or Ayaso, the capital of Great Accra.

²⁶³ Hampton, 1978, p. 41. fn. 50. Transcribed from field recordings, Tape 20, December 1970, XXXIX Reel A2012.

²⁶⁴ Field, 1940, p. 144.

regarded as the women's *asafo*,²⁶⁵ The songs are said to be used as moral support for *asafo* activity and most scholars agree that *adowa* is the women's *afaso* and was adopted by Ga women.

Women often accompanied men to the battlefield, where they carried water for them and sang [...]. They would also dance, waving white handkerchiefs, which symbolized victory and peace. The women who remained at home made war medicine for the success of the warriors. When the warriors and their *mantse* returned, the members of the *adowa* company came to the periphery of the town to meet them, singing *adowa* songs in praise of the surviving warriors and the bravery of those killed in battle.²⁶⁶

I discussed the role of the *Asafoiatse* (warrior) in contemporary society with *Asafoiatse* Aboadoni (from Teshie), whose traditional role is a military warrior. He explained that Fante people (Ga neighbours to the west) have continued the tradition of *asafo*.

So, for the Fante, 'if they have fifty *asafo* members then they have fifty young people waiting. Let's call them an academy, they have fifty academy students who have learned, or are learning the repertoire. But we the Ga didn't do it that way, and that is one of our problems.'²⁶⁷

Today Aboadoni described his role of *Asafoiatse*, (warrior) in Teshie's 'Traditional Council,' as 'to preserve the sanctity of peace' in the community, 'not with war songs as we did in the past, *adowa* songs today are social songs.'²⁶⁸ The 'absence of war doesn't mean peace, we have crime in our communities, people misbehaving, so we are fighting against crime, and that is our [contemporary] role.'²⁶⁹

To clarify Aboadoni's statement, the traditional role of the police and military in Ga society was a voluntary role, incorporating the *asafo* in the community. The organisation had a social and military musical structure as referred to by Aboadoni, and crime was almost non-existent. The system was banned by the colonisers who took over the role of policing as well as

²⁶⁵ Hampton, 1978, p. 44.

²⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 42.

²⁶⁷ Asafoiatse Aboadoni (Teshie), 4th December 2012, National Theatre Accra. WS750062.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

the military. This resulted in the music of the *afaso* as described by Aboadoni being discontinued,²⁷⁰ and the *adowa* music of the women's military organisations becoming a social music largely heard today during funerals.

4. 5. Ga Religious Music in Contemporary Society

During field-research I attended several events in Teshie, one of the six Ga towns half way along the Ga coastal stretch between Accra and Tema. The events were held at the shrine adjacent to the fishing beach on Tuesdays (when the sea was closed for fishing) each week. The audience was largely, but not exclusively, made up of women from the fishing community, and the events I attended in Teshie attracted approximately three to four hundred people at each session, from all generations.

Teshie is still a relatively small community, (compared to Ga Mashie) where the traditional trades of fishing (male) and fish-trading (female) are practised. The original *wei* line the narrow street leading to the shrine and have the name of the founding family (*we*) over the door. The events I attended were stewarded by several *wulomei* and elders of the town (men and women). I noted a great deal of respect was shown to the *wulomei* and elders, which I had not seen in other circumstances.

The shrine is a sacred space in the centre of the community where the gods



Plate 8: Teshie shrine in dance area.

of the sea reside, and the dancing area was rectangular (approximately twenty metres by forty), arranged around the shrine. Musicians were seated at one end, closest to the sea, and the official party (*wulomo*, chief, and priests) at the opposite end. At each event, the *woyei* would sit on the long side of the rectangle to the left of the musicians and to the right of the official party. The audience stood or sat along all four sides of the rectangle.

²⁷⁰

The songs are preserved in the communities.

The drumming was an ensemble of three tuned drums, with the addition of a double-headed drum (armpit control). Two Gong Gong (*Nono*) players stood behind the drummers to keep time and additionally, two shakers were played to heighten the tension when a *woyo* appeared agitated, swaying, rocking and showing the signs of becoming entranced.



Plate 9: Musician's helping Woyo into trance

At the first event I attended, an entranced *woyo* appeared from the dressing area having changed clothes to identify the character that was making an appearance. The crowd instantly recognised the newly-arrived and welcomed them with applause. When each *woyo* took the lead, as dancer, or became entranced, they were handed a horse's tail that was a visual indication that they were taking the leading role.



Plate 10: Woyo entranced.



Plate.11: Woyo in British attire.

During the event, a *woyo* made her appearance dressed as a British lady in a white lace dress. She wore a small hat, white ankle socks and high-heeled white shoes, and smoked throughout her performance. Further to this, she wore a bustle to enlarge her buttocks.

Although the performance was presented in a spiritual context, it contained satirical comedy drawing from oral history and inherited knowledge about the British colonists.²⁷¹

What I was observing at these events was how in 'the contexts of worship, religious music and dance [are] presented as a social theatrical event, and the audience might be believers or they may be attending for entertainment,' or both. The 'religious and aesthetic events' were 'guided by the artistic concepts and



Plate. 12: Woyo entranced.

values of the society to which the community of worshippers, mediums and music-makers belong.'²⁷² For these audiences, the afternoons offered the opportunity to demonstrate social solidarity. As Turley suggests 'the glue that holds societies together from primitive to advanced societies, is social solidarity.'²⁷³ The events 'create a group response,' and says Turley, 'these responses help to create group cohesion and solidarity because of the shared experience of the [event or] ceremony.'²⁷⁴ The events were presented in the context of religion, but the audience could be believers or non-believers whilst participating in, enjoying and sharing a creative experience. Some scholars call this kind of cohesion 'flow',²⁷⁵ when during the act of participation the ego, or self-awareness is lost whilst 'integrating and uniting [with] the members of a social group.'²⁷⁶



Plate 13: Audience participation in Teshie.

The audiences that I observed were made up of a cross-section of the generations, but clearly there were divisions of roles and responsibilities amongst them, to distinguish the official party, elders, musicians, and dancers (priestesses).

Although Teshie is a semi-urban community the older demarcations of the society's evolution were evident. Those present were the chiefs, the wulomei, the musicians, priestesses and the trainee priestesses, along with

²⁷² Nketia, 2010, p. 26.

²⁷³ Alan C. Turley, 2005. p. 64.

²⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 65.

²⁷⁵ Turino, 2008, Turner, 1982, Csikszentmihalyi, 1974, Schechner, 1985, Bateson, 1972.

²⁷⁶ Turino, 2008, p.3.

the elders (who maintained order), and the different categories amongst the audience included representatives of all generations.

The events I attended were on the Sabbath day (Tuesdays) of the Sea God, and the place of the activity was at the shrine where the god resides, which is a holy place. The events celebrated and paid respect to the gods associated with the livelihood of the community.

4. 6. Christianity and the Charismatic Pentecostal Movement

It is impossible to be in Accra without acknowledging the Christian cultural forces that have assumed a prominent position in the cultural life of the people. The Christian religion has been present in Ghana since it was introduced by the Portuguese in the 15th century, when Roman Catholic missionaries accompanied Portuguese traders to the Gold Coast, and later the German, Dutch and British established their own missionary centres. Never the less Christianity, Islam²⁷⁷ and the 'traditional' religion²⁷⁸ have lived together peacefully for several centuries.

More recently African 'Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity has proven successful' in infiltrating society in Ghana because of its 'openness to the supernatural,' its use of performance during worship, and the utilisation of 'oral theological forms that resonate with traditional African' forms of religious worship.²⁷⁹

'African religion is expected to deal with the effects of evil caused by demonic spirits and witchcraft'.²⁸⁰ The colonisers banned various 'indigenous mechanisms' for dealing with witchcraft,²⁸¹ therefore Africanised churches have taken on this role in what the social-psychologist, Margaret Field,²⁸² called a 'neurotic response' to modernisation, the cash economy, the growth of possessive individualism and a general weakening of traditional kinship ties.²⁸³ When prosperity failed to materialise 'the

²⁷⁷ Introduced from the north of Ghana.

²⁷⁸ Amongst the Ga Kple religion is called the 'Traditional Religion', in line with other ethnic groups across Africa.

²⁷⁹ Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, 2014, p.1.

²⁸⁰ Ibid. p.2.

²⁸¹ John Collins for Birgit Meyer, 2002, p.391.

²⁸² Field, 1960.

²⁸³ Other writers on Ghana who have made a similar observation include Christensen 1962, Garlick 1971 and Twumasi 1975. In a similar vein, the Comoroffs (1998) discuss the concern with witchcraft being used for modern material ends ('occult economies') in South Africa as a response of global capitalism and neo-liberal economics on local/rural societies.

‘deliverance’ churches’ arrived with the theory that ‘any lack of prosperity’ is caused by ‘witches in workplaces’ and other demonic forces which had to be ‘exorcised.’²⁸⁴ Most of these concerns are associated with the anxieties of modernisation and the accelerating materialist economy, much of which is addressed in music, dance and drama. The churches provide ‘supernatural explanations for the problems created by modern life, such as material inequality,’ and further provide reassurance that external spiritual forces will address the problems of society.²⁸⁵

As Agawu describes, a ‘talking-drum may well announce the sermon whilst the preacher, in approaching the pulpit, is accompanied by a linguist (*Okyeame*)’ who will visually assert authority by ‘bearing a traditional linguist’s staff.’²⁸⁶ Intervals are filled with ‘vigorous drumming, dancing, and shouting of appellations to God.’²⁸⁷

By the mid-twentieth century ‘popular performance and the spiritual churches’ had become the focus of ‘inexpensive emotional cathartic release for the ‘intermediates’ and poor urban masses, who became possessed whilst charismatic preachers, pastors and prophets made dramatic divinations, miracles and exorcisms.’²⁸⁸ As with traditional religious worship Africanised Christian church worship is ‘presented as a social theatrical event, and [again] the audience might be believers or attending for entertainment,’ or both.²⁸⁹

With contemporary Africanised Christian worship aiming to be at the heart of popular culture, and after ‘two-and-a-half years of night curfew,’ the emerging entertainment industry collapsed in the 1970s.²⁹⁰ The churches were able to take advantage of this collapse, and use their tax-exempt status to capture the popular music market.²⁹¹ ‘Popular’ Christianity became a ‘transcultural urban phenomenon,’ that taps traditional resources.²⁹² In the 1980s the separatist churches industrialised their music production. According to Collins,²⁹³ they ‘established recording studios and commercial

²⁸⁴ John Collins for Birgit Meyer, 2002, p.395.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Agawu, 2003, p.11.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ John Collins for Birgit Meyer, 2002, p.395.

²⁸⁹ Nketia, 2010, p. 26.

²⁹⁰ John Collins for Birgit Meyer, 2002, p.395

²⁹¹ The government imposed a luxury tax on entertainment related products, such as instruments and equipment.

²⁹² John Collins for Birgit Meyer, 2002, p.395.

²⁹³ Ibid.

cassette production facilities,²⁹⁴ organising the promotion and endorsing gospel music that accounts for seventy percent of the local air-play and local cassette production of Ghana.²⁹⁵ In 2013 air-play and sales represented a similar figure. In this way the Africanised churches, some arriving from other African countries, others from the USA, dominate popular culture in Ghana.

Chapter Five

Social Music in Ga Culture

In 'the social realm', asserts Odotei, 'the Ghanaian has been transformed into a pseudo-European [...] way of life largely fashioned along European lines.'²⁹⁶

Ideas about special links between music and identity are frequently offered to explain why 'a particular social group, community, population, or nation cultivates [particular] musical practices.'²⁹⁷ Arguments are often put 'forward to explain why immigrant groups in large multi-cultural cities cling tenaciously to their 'traditional' music – they are 'maintaining group identity in a multi-ethnic society',²⁹⁸ a mechanism Turley described as creating 'solidarity'.²⁹⁹ Diawara asserts that the songs tell us 'how noble we are, how much history we have', who we are, and how special we are.³⁰⁰ John Bailey considers that issues of cultural identity seem likely to 'constitute some of the major problems confronting humanity in the twenty-first century.'³⁰¹

²⁹⁴ Ibid. For example in Accra there are the Jesus Above All Recording Studio and the Holy Spirit Digital Studio. Some churches also set up production/distributions companies such as the JBA Missionary and Joyful Way incorporated.

²⁹⁵ 60% of the local airplay according to see the Christian Messenger newspaper vol. 9 1990, page 1 and 4; a figure also quoted by Odoson Ofori in the Mirror of 21st May 1990. Between 1992-6 Agordah (2000:18) states that 70% of commercial cassette sales in Ghana was of local gospel. This is born out by the cassette sale figures from the Ghana Copyright Administration which in 1994 were 590,000 for local gospel and 550,000 for other forms of local popular music, between September 1998 and September 1999 these were 754,000 and 783,000 respectively.

²⁹⁶ Irene Odotei. 2008.

²⁹⁷ John Bailey. 1994, p.46.

²⁹⁸ Allen and Groce, 1988, p. 4.

²⁹⁹ Turley, 2005, p.64.

³⁰⁰ Manthia Diawara, 1997, p. 26.

³⁰¹ John Bailey, 1994, p.45.

Aware of the multi-ethnic nature of society in the Accra plain, I was interested to explore how the various and diverse cultural groups interact socially to assert identity and express their values. Daniel Avorgbedor³⁰² identified ‘over 200 Anlo-Ewe’ Habɔɔ groups and associations in Accra,³⁰³ ‘most visibly articulated in performance contexts, many with strong connection to the home village or town of the group members in the Volta region’. Today the core of social and cultural activities among the ‘habɔɔwo (habɔɔ, sing) centres around vufɔfo (lit., ‘beating of drum’),³⁰⁴ which is a composite art involving song, percussion instruments, dance, prescribed costume, and gesticulation.’³⁰⁵

The Ewe, like other ethnic groups, migrate to Accra or Tema for employment opportunities, maintaining strong ties with their origins, hometowns and villages. They continue to practice their spiritual beliefs and carry the associated talismans (for protection), even though they may attend a Christian church. Unlike the Ga, Anlo-Ewe and other migrant groups in the Accra plain have a hometown, in a different region, offering some degree of continuity, roots, and identity. Through social activities the migrant groups maintain ‘social solidarity’ and collective ‘identity’ as outlined by Diawara, Bailey, Turino and Turley.³⁰⁶

5. 1. Social and Recreational music

My aim is here to explore music, dance and performance that persists through the generations, and how such continuity takes place amongst the Ga people. I found in Accra a strong generational factor, music is constantly on the move keeping aligned with the passing generations, assimilating and reconstructing.

In the 1950s and 60s, says Yacub Addy, ‘we had many different styles of social music [...] music played just for enjoyment’ in the community. Rhythms such as *Ali*, *Koyi*, *Tumatu*, *Ayika*, *Boade*, *Konkoma*, which most

³⁰² Avorgbedor, 2001, p.262.

³⁰³ Ibid. Avorgbedor found that 20 groups have in excess of 600 member.

³⁰⁴ Avorgbedor, 2001, p. 267. Printed constitutions and membership certificates are important evidence of group membership, and the constitutions highlight regular participation in music, both as a key privilege and as an obligation.

³⁰⁵ For detailed information on the general Anlo-Ewe musical culture see, for example, Kofi Anyidoho (1983).

Avorgbedor (1994:105-19), Nissio Fiagbedzi (1977), and Kobla Ladzek-po (1971:6-13).

³⁰⁶ Diawara, 1997. Bailey 1994, Turino 2008, and Turley 2004.

Ghanaians today have never heard of.’³⁰⁷ Social music in Accra was ‘never far removed from folk tradition’, asserts Yacub Addy ‘my senior brother Akwei Wejei would go village to village and bring the latest rhythms back to us, and we would improve them and add our own styles.’³⁰⁸ In this way during the 1950s and 60s the music and dances developed through the dynamics of culture. ‘Avenor drummers were the champions of *Oge*, the predecessor of *Kpanlogo*’.³⁰⁹ Mustapha Tettey Addy told me, ‘*Oge* was/is a music, of the Kru people, originating from Liberia,’³¹⁰ *Kpanlogo*, he said, ‘was developed from *Oge* and *Kolomashi*.’³¹¹ According to Yacub Addy,³¹² ‘*Kolomashi* was used for protest during our independence struggle in the 1940s and 50s.’³¹³ It uses home-made frame-drums that Ghanaians would play and march to the Castle, the headquarters of the British colonial administration. ‘The police would, break their drums and beat them, so they would go home, make more drums, and do it again.’³¹⁴

The Ga people had no traditional stringed instruments, Coplan points out, and additionally, ‘their traditional scale is pentatonic, and polyphonic intervals of fourths and fifths are favoured.’³¹⁵ Therefore, ‘Ga people and their harmonic preferences were much further removed from the musical traditions of the West than were the nearly diatonic Akan.’³¹⁶

The musicians of the Gold Coast responded to the cultural change that came with the arrival of the Europeans with leisure-time and entertainment, which is implied by the very term ‘highlife’:

The series of dramatic musical innovations grouped under the rubric highlife gained increasing popularity and distribution because they provided affective expression, and therefore mediation, of social and interpersonal conflict inherent in the colonial order and its attendant process of enforced modernisation.³¹⁷

³⁰⁷ NEA National Heritage Fellowships: Yacub Addy, Ghanaian drum master
<http://www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/fellow.php?id=2010_01&type=int>.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Ibid. Avenor was a small village on the outskirts of Colonial Accra, more engulfed in urban sprawl.

³¹⁰ A large community of Kru people lived in Accra, working as sailors.

³¹¹ *Oge* originated from Liberia and was style of percussion music that was popular amongst the Ga during the 1950s.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Coplan, (ed.) 1978, p. 103.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

Highlife was ‘not merely the result of mechanical or passive acculturation but a creative, incorporative response to the political and economic impact and cultural challenge of the West.’ It was developed through a process that ‘modifies and integrates both Western and indigenous musical elements into an organic, qualitatively new style that retains expressive continuity.’³¹⁸

Highlife incorporated commonly used theatrical forms of entertainment, including the highlife ‘concert party’ dramas that propagated social commentary. In 1972, the internationally respected Ghanaian musician Saka Acquaye, whose folk opera ‘The Lost Fishermen’ is arguably the most popular folk opera in Ghana,³¹⁹ teamed up with a group of traditionally-oriented Ga musicians and dancers to form ‘the first Ga guitar band to achieve widespread popularity, called ‘Wulomei’,³²⁰ in 1972. led by Nii Ashitey.

Like the melodies of Kpanlogo [in the 1960s], the songs of Wulomei [in the 1970s] show the influence of church harmonies, Akan Highlife melodic progression, and a preference for intervals in thirds and sixths. The guitar is played by a Fante musician in the Akan ‘traditional’ highlife style. Musically, the Wulomei are modern Akans in neo-traditional Ga clothing, with even a little Ewe thrown in. The music appeals across the ethnic boundaries to all kinds of young Ghanaians, but the neo-traditional mise-en-scene, complete with fetish dancing, raffia skirt, and a good deal of sexual suggestion, has a special appeal to an urbanised generation seeking to return to values drawn from many indigenous traditions.³²¹

5. 2. Local Communication Systems in Communities

Chief Nii Kweikuma IV of the Anumansa Division, Jamestown, outlined the social music of Ga that he believed would be most relevant for personal, social and community development and identity:

What strikes us here is our folkloric music, our dirges, and any other type of music that spurs you on, as soon as the rhythm strikes we know exactly what it’s for. It may be ritual, social, community work

³¹⁸

Ibid.

³¹⁹ Moses N. Nii-Dortey, -2010, ‘Lost Fishermen’ is a story that draws on Ga oral history.

³²⁰ Coplan, 1978, (ed) Nettl, Bruno, p.103.

³²¹ Ibid., p. 111.

but you will appreciate what traditional music does for most situations and circumstances that you find yourself in, and how to overcome these circumstances.³²²

The point the chief makes is that songs carry moral codes associated with the lineage groups or clans. Additionally, he outlined the community spirit associated with uplift by belonging to a clan or having group identity.

If you are a shy, withdrawn, reserved type and introvert, we have songs that will spur you on, with a message that is about coming together for a common agenda, which will strengthen the bonding [...] to overcome an obstacle so it gives you an idea of unity. Of course unity is strength. If there is dissension in the community there will be no development, the moment there is unity in the community then there is development.³²³

Adaawe

In an interview, Mustapha Tettey Addy described what he considers to be a potent tool for development, as the Ga women's ensembles called '*adaawe* or *adaiwee*.'³²⁴ These women come together in the evenings after the day's work, and gathered information about the activities of people in the community and created songs based on their findings. Addy describes this form of social commentary on community and individuals as 'a powerful medium to keep the communities in order.'³²⁵ *Adaawe* songs and performances have any text based on the activities of the community and the findings of the *adaawe* group members. In the past the groups had not expected any financial reward for their participation, which had been informal and community based.

In April, I met the *adaawe* ensemble in Kokrobitie,³²⁶ and interviewed Korkor Nunu the leader of the group. The group had never been formally constituted, and their activities had been informal. Nunu told me the group had stopped their community activities, although they sometimes performed at funerals. When I asked her why, she said that they no longer

³²² Chief Nii Kweikuma IV, Interview 23rd November 2012. Jamestown. WS750038.

³²³ Chief Nii Kweikuma IV, Interview 23rd November 2012. Jamestown. WS750038.

³²⁴ Two commonly used spellings *Adaawe* and *Adaiwee*.

³²⁵ Mustapha Tettey Addy, Interview. 26th November 2012. Kokrobitie. WS750050.

³²⁶ Korkor Nunu, Interview 25th of March 2013. Kokrobitie. WS750089/91.

had the time. As the conversation progressed, it transpired that one of the reasons was that the church discouraged *adaawe*, and further progression revealed the main reason to be a lack of finance. The group had performed weekly at the African Academy of Music and Arts run and owned by Addy.³²⁷ The Academy in the past had been a Sunday afternoon



venue frequented by chiefs, elders, diplomats, government officials, MPs, tourists, as well as students. Entertainment during these afternoons included *adaawe*, and Nunu's group had been paid for their weekly performances. It emerged that for survival the group needed a more formal economic structure. Nunu confessed that she had a hard time bringing the women together as 'they don't do it for free anymore,' and she had no financial support to pay the women expenses, or provide refreshments.

Plate 14: Korkor Nunu. Leader of the *Adaawe* Kokrobitie.

The village of Kokrobitie has been encroached on by the sprawl of Accra, and *adaawe* is musical drama, dependent on a closely-knit community, therefore the women may have found that as Kokrobitie urbanised they had no place in the emerging cosmopolitan socio-cultural structure.

Addy's Academy had been the first to initiate support for the renewal, teaching, maintenance, and/or survival of Ghanaian ethnic specific musical culture. The survival of the Academy was purely dependent on financial support from international students or Ghanaian arts education. With no contribution from the Ghanaian government, and Ghanaian students unable to pay a fee, the Academy declined after a few very successful years, despite Addy's intention to support and perpetuate various forms of Ghana's music and dance.

Although I did not observe *adaawe* performances in the village, I observed a performance in Addys' garden where the Kokrobite group performed some of the songs that had formed the basis of their repertoire. The group consisted of five older women, with no young members. The women sang and danced whilst Nunu played the finger castanets to mark the time. The themes of their songs were as follows:-

³²⁷

Academy of African Music and Arts Ltd (AAMAL).

01:53:45.³²⁸

In days gone by people walked from Accra to Kasoa [20 kilometres] Repeat x 3

Now you need to take transport or a car.

In days gone by people would walk from Accra to Kasoa
Repeat x 3

04:09:44.

I don't like the way you talk about me all over the place.
Stop it I'm tired of it.

04:32:05.

Mother is sweet x 6

Sweet mother x 6

04:42:02.

Addy reminds them of their old repertoire.

04:51:20.

Aduwa is beautiful (unfinished)

05:31:04.

I don't have a sister

I don't have a brother

I am walking alone

05:43:41.

If you don't want me then send me back to my father Repeat
x 3

If I am no good for you then take me back to my father so
you can be free

If you don't want me then send me back to my father x 3

If I am no good for you then take me back to my father so
you can be free.

07:04:12.

Take two.

07:46:02.

Marriage is clean

I take one small fish to make a nice soup

If you don't have money you can make a soup with one small
fish

A small fish can become something big if there is love

08:38:34.

It doesn't matter what you have

You don't take it with you when you die.³²⁹

³²⁸

DVD Tk 5. Time code provided.

³²⁹

DVD. Tk. 5. Adaawe Kokrobitie.



Plate 15: Watching video playback.

The women were excited to see the video played as instant feedback, and positively discussed holding weekly rehearsals. Addy offered them the facilities of the Academy dance or drama studio, although I understand they declined due to a lack of financial support.

As a means of entertainment, *adaawe* like the Akan women's *nwonkoro* groups can attract and hold the interest of large audiences because they employ an oral medium and use the local language in LCS forms.³³⁰

Adesa

Adesa is a Ga local communication system that uses a social drama activity where a storyteller, singers, musicians and dancers engage with the audience who become part of a performance. The drama begins with a performer's story which is constantly interrupted by musicians, singers or dancers who claim that the story-teller is lying, is wrong, or they claim, 'I was there that day, and it wasn't like that' it was like this.



Plate 16: Adesa group Jametown.

Dancers perform what is called a talk-dance, after which the storyteller will continue with constant interruptions from the musicians, singers and dancers. Through such community drama, the performer, musicians and the audience merge in a communal activity.

The stories can relate to any subject, although most likely the purpose of the gathering will include myths, legends, biographies, contemporary stories and/or folk-tales told in cleverly constructed proverbs. Songs during the interludes will divert the story into a different subject, proverb or moral tale from oral tradition. During funerals the stories might include reference to events and achievement made during the life of the departed.³³¹

³³⁰ Akosua Anyidoho, 1994, p.148

³³¹ Adesa is demonstrated in the folio accompanying this dissertation.

5. 3. Music in Social Enterprise and Development

In Ussherstown, Ga Mashie, Accra, I met several times with a group of young people who had formed an ensemble called Eshee Nyɔɔmɔ Cultural Troup. The group was led and trained by Amartei, a drummer from a Ga family we in Bukom.

The Troup earn a small income by providing entertainment at funerals, ceremonies and festivals, and meet in the early evenings each day after school in a derelict shop opposite the Ussher Fort, on the High Street in Ga Mashie. Amartei told me that he had trained several groups and that he tries to keep a high standard, but there is heavy pressure on the young people to abandon their interest in traditional drum and dance.

The Eshee Nyɔɔmɔ Cultural Troup is one of the 'many contemporary dance groups' Nketia asserted, to 'have emerged following Opoku's way of choreographing'. The dances I observed in rehearsal were the *Kpanlogo* drum-and-dance as well as the Ewe's *Atsiagbekor*, war-dance, with male and female participants.³³² The evening rehearsals were supervised by a male and a female tutor who expected a high standard. At one of the sessions, I observed the girls being taught various dance movements by the female tutor. The tutor was a young woman in her early twenties. She had a long flexible stick and each time a trainee made a wrong movement she would flick the ankle of the trainee with the stick. The trainee would stop and start the movement again. This continued time after time, until finally the trainee got it right.

International NGO activities in Creative Arts

Further along the High Street in Jamestown, I found the British NGO 'Theatre for a Change' at Jamestown Community Theatre. The theatre was a restored colonial building, where a Western-type proscenium stage area had been installed (unlike the traditional informal performance area), and so far as I could ascertain was the only community social facility in Ga Mashie (Jamestown, Ussherstown, or Bukom), shared amongst a population of 770,000 people. Theatre for a Change produce UK/Euro funded HIV/AIDS campaigns in the Greater Accra region, promoting the ABC approach.³³³

³³² DVD. TK. 6. The Eshee Nyɔɔmɔ Jamestown.

³³³ The ABC approach promotes; abstinence, be faithful, use a condom.

At the theatre, I met a young man named Isaac Nii Kwartey Owoo, bursting with creative energy. Owoo told me he was providing drum and dance lessons at the theatre for young people in the community. He outlined the current problems associated with 'negative attitudes' toward culture that Nii Yartey, Coplan and Turino commented on earlier.³³⁴ Owoo told me that the parents of his students argue, 'we will call the police to arrest you if you don't stop my child from coming to your class.' This situation said Owoo 'is really getting us down.'³³⁵

Owoo was overflowing with ideas of how to use music in development as well as for tourism. One of his plans is to 'make an annual competition for each dance, so that groups will perfect dances in order to win the event.' The idea is that when the community-members in Jamestown see the dances being performed they 'will come out and say this is our culture,' let us 'create a story through drumming and dancing, that is what I want to see,' said Awoo.³³⁶ The idea of the competition, he said, 'is to reincarnate a semi-dead culture, to make it live, because now it is semi-dead, it's fading away.'³³⁷

Owoo's ideas for his projects were amidst the Ga settlements of Bukom, Jamestown and Usshertown, the poorest settlements in Accra, and arguably in Ghana. Additionally, to 'Theatre for a Change' another British charity, 'Indigenous People', share their premises, and with whom Owoo is also involved. 'Indigenous People' who function as culture brokers by selecting musicians to travel to the UK and perform on the festival circuit.³³⁸ In 2013 the group 'Indigenous People' put together was 'Kakatsitsi Master Drummers' from Ghana who played a one-hour-set, backing the electronic dance-music veterans 'The Orb' on the West Holts Stage at Glastonbury Festival. Wearing the attire of the 'Wulomei,' (Ga priests)³³⁹ the drummers can be seen playing backing percussion to The Orb's 1991 hit 'Little Fluffy Clouds'.³⁴⁰

³³⁴ Nii-Yartey, 2011; Coplan, 1985; Turino, 2000.

³³⁵ Isaac Nii Kwartey Owoo, Interview, 3rd December 2012. Community Theatre, James Town. WS750058/9.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ This activity puts Owoo in high regard by young people and musicians in Ghana as a visa to travel abroad is highly desirable.

³³⁹ Kakatsitsi at Glastonbury 2013, <http://www.indigenouspeople.org.uk/> (accessed March 2014).

³⁴⁰ As culture brokers 'Indigenous People' claim 'we are pleased to announce that between May and October 2014 we will once again be touring the Kakatsitsi Master Drummers from Ghana and developing our own 'in-house' fusion set with former Ministry of Sound DJ Rebecca Vasmant.

The next time I saw Awoo was in London (six months later), when he told me he had recently started a Radio Station in Jamestown.³⁴¹ He had been invited to London by the studio manager at SOAS Radio whom he had met during her visit to Accra. Owoo said he hoped to stay in London and teach 'African Drumming' at SOAS.

In contrast to Owoo's ideas when I interviewed Nii Yartey who stressed the need for community consultation:

When I was younger I tried to build a dance-school in the hub of Accra, Bukom. I wanted to turn the ruffians who smoke Ganja into something. My uncle [*Nai Wulomo*] was part of my revolution to help me to get a place. I didn't get it. An NGO came along and set up to train people in carpentry, and the people broke in and stole all the equipment, so what I am saying is, where is the consultation?³⁴²

During my interview with Nii Yartey, he outlined the financial problems associated with development. 'What we are going through now,' he said, is 'we want money from you, not tools to clean the gutters.'³⁴³

The affluent countries are not worried for material things, people are looking for humanity, we have too much of the humanity, and we don't have the material things. So here is a conflict, and that's why it comes to deceiving. Their gutters are choked with plastic, giving them malaria, dysentery, typhoid and cholera, but they don't think that the gutters are the problem, they think that the problem is that they don't have money. So for me, education is the priority.³⁴⁴

5. 4. Conclusion

Chapter Five started out with Odotei's assertion that 'the Ghanaian has been transformed into a pseudo-European [...] way of life largely fashioned along European lines.'³⁴⁵

³⁴¹ JT Live Radio. <https://www.facebook.com/jtliveradioghana> (Accessed April 2014).

³⁴² Professor F Nii Yartey – Interview 3rd April 2013. Legon WS750110.

³⁴³ Professor F Nii Yartey – Interview 3rd April 2013. Legon WS750110.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ Irene Odotei, 2008, *Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon*.

Paper presented to visiting students from the US at Department of Social Work, UG, Legon, (January 11, 2008) < <http://irenekodotei.org/content/history-ghana>>

After independence the state made a 'deliberate' attempt to 'recontextualise' the performance sector. This says Nketia has 'influenced the ways that some [performers] approach their music', but 'it was something we were forced to do because at the time of independence we had nothing of our own to hold onto.'³⁴⁶ However, in contrast social music in the same period is described by Yacub Addy and Mustapha Tettey Addy as dynamic and vibrant, constantly under reconstruction, as new folk music was brought from the villages or along the coast.

Chapter Six

The Matter of Ga Culture in Ga Society

My research was concerned with how music, and musicians, engage with their community and how they can be assisted to build a structure to generate community-driven social and human development. In the field, I found many people who had a vision, but every vision had an agenda behind it originating outside the community. Accra was full of NGOs, international specialists, consultants, culture brokers and activists as well as scholars, all consulting on the various aspects of Ghana's 'development' needs, but as Nii Yartey pointed out:

When you are consulting with the community 'the people with whom you consult must understand where you're coming from. Their level of thinking about development should match yours; if you are to have any kind of meaningful communication, it comes down to [...] finding a consultation system that learns about how [people] think, what they think, and how they do things. If it's not coming from that then it creates a confused society.'³⁴⁷

Additionally Nii Yartey asserts, the education system in Ghana 'doesn't belong to our system, and is based on someone else's values.' These values are being perpetuated in the schools.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁶ Wiggins, Trevor, and J.H. Kwabena Nketia, 2005, p.66.

³⁴⁷ Professor F Nii Yartey –Interview 3rd April 2013.Legon WS750110.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

6. 1. Culture in Community and Education

Ga have embraced musical practices introduced by others who came and continue to come amongst them. The arts, it seems, were central to Ga evolution, or even survival, as they found it necessary to create musical forms and dances for men and women to help enact the structures of social and religious governance during their cultural development.³⁴⁹

Nii Yartey believes that there is a ‘two prong change’ amongst the Ga:

One is the philosophy or the world view of the people [who no longer welcome strangers in their midst]. And the other is [what comes with] the kinds of people who have (quote - unquote) invaded the territory, and the mind with which these people have come. The compatibility or otherwise of the values that these people have brought to the domain of the Ga has created a different culture for the Ga.³⁵⁰

Many Ga have chosen to shift their identities to accommodate an imagined vision of Euro-American culture, and live in the hope that the Africanised Christianity they have embraced might bring prosperity.

As outlined in chapters four and five, Ga have music to serve different needs. The religious *Kple*, *Me and Kpa* forms are commonly used, and the song narratives provide meanings and links to oral histories. Additionally, the theatrical devices of *adaawe* (social comment) and *adesa* (with challenge and interruption) provide models of participation that include drama using the local communication systems. Chief Nii Kweikuma IV identifies Ga folk music that creates social solidarity and a common agenda in unity and believes it would assist Ga during community development. The chiefs ideas are in line with what anthropologist Victor Turner calls *communitas*, a collective state achieved through rituals where all personal differences of class, age, gender, and other personal distinctions are stripped away allowing people to temporarily merge through their basic humanity.³⁵¹ A similar idea is expressed by anthropologists such as ‘Clifford Geertz, Gregory Bateson, Mary Douglas and Victor Turner,³⁵² [who] have returned cultural

³⁴⁹ The Obonu talking dance and adowa/ asafo.

³⁵⁰ Professor F Nii Yartey –Interview 3rd April 2013. Legon WS750110.

³⁵¹ Thomas Turino, 2008, p. 18.

³⁵² See Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of the Mind*; Mary Douglas, *Implicit Meanings and her Purity and Danger*; Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture*, and Victor Turner’s *The Ritual Process*. Also the later work, James Peacock’s *Rites of Modernisation*.

systems and performative genres to their rightful place in the study of social action'.³⁵³

Amongst the Ga, participation, for example the religious dances of Teshie, is an important part of religious and social solidarity. The need for participation and the unfulfilled promises of material advance made after independence are two factors that have attracted Ghanaians to the Charismatic Pentecostal Africanised churches.³⁵⁴ These churches offer the opportunity to participate in music and dance which is a prerequisite in order for Ga to seek solidarity in ways described earlier by Turner and by Turley as group-cohesion and solidarity.³⁵⁵ As outlined earlier this state of cohesion is described as 'flow' by Turino, who asserts that 'over the last three decades, ethnomusicologists have repeatedly documented the special power of music for realising social identities and cultural subjectivities'.³⁵⁶ This state of 'flow' is similarly achieved in the Africanised Christian churches in Ghana, with unknown benefits.

6. 2. Applied Ethnomusicology in Development

With special attention to the ethical consideration outlined in 1.2. of this dissertation, at various interviews with Ga cultural leaders, scholars and culture bearers, ideas were discussed about how Ga people could develop a programme of participatory action, involving *adesa*, *adaawe*, *asafo*, *adowa* and other folk music forms to address their current concerns and development.

Research outlined the following:

Nii Yartey, expressed concern that consultants arrive with a global view of the world that doesn't connect with the people, so we need to 'find a consultation process that learns about how they [Ga] think, and how they do things'.³⁵⁷

If I am bringing what I call development to your home it is generally agreed that I will come and ask you. They come inside your house,

³⁵³ Louise Bourgault, cited ed Ansu-Kyeremen, 2005. Original The Journal of Development Communication, Vol. 2. Number 2 edition, pp.49-73.

³⁵⁴ Collins, 2000, and eds. M. Palmberg and A. Kirkegaard 2002, pp. 60-74.

³⁵⁵ Turino, 2008; Turner, 1969.

³⁵⁶ Turino, 2008, p.2. (cites. e.g. Peria 1985; Feld 1988; Koskoff 1989; Waterman 1990; Turino 1993; Stokes 1994; Sugarman 1997; Radano and Bohlman 2000b; Turino and Lea 2004; Feldman 2006; Buchana 2006).

³⁵⁷ Professor F Nii Yartey –Interview 3rd April 2013. Legon WS750110.

and they bring with them their own perspectives, some of which might merge with yours and much may be in competition to what you believe in practicing in your own home. So people come, they have NGO's, they have money and they say we have come to build new houses.³⁵⁸

In the eastern region of Ghana, Komla Tsey initiated an oral history approach to social and community development, in the rural Ewe village of Botoku. Tsey's rationale was that 'the more people reflect on their previous experiences, [...] the more they are likely to learn from them.' This he says is an 'important motivator', where in 'community development there may be a slow process in achieving tangible results'.³⁵⁹ Tsey's work highlights the value 'local indigenous knowledge systems can bring to promoting unique understanding about sustainable development and how local communities might go about achieving' their aims.³⁶⁰

Ga are an oral society and oral knowledge 'in the material world' is 'undervalued'.³⁶¹ As Agawu points out, 'the road to empowerment is one that embraces the challenge of written representation'.³⁶² For the Ga, how this knowledge is collected, collated and therefore owned is an important consideration, as written representation can only be democratically achieved through the communal activities of the culture bearers. Therefore the raw research needs analysis by the community not the researcher. Additionally, the oral histories of the different groups in the traditional areas vary, as did the path of their migration, involving interaction with other cultures during their journey, making it necessary to engage with each of the six traditional areas and their quarters.

A Hypothetical Pilot Project?

In one of the Ga 'traditional areas' a pilot project could test the feasibility of this process of community development and community education. To address Agawu's concerns of empowerment and ownership, the University of Rio de Janeiro, Ethnomusicology Laboratory,³⁶³ provides a model.³⁶⁴

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Komla Tsey, 2011, p. 21.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Agawu, 2003, p.26.

³⁶² Ibid.

³⁶³ Araujo, 2013.

³⁶⁴ Agawu, 2003, p.203.

Folk music and drama, the vehicles used to transmit oral history, might be centred upon participatory events, where people are encouraged to challenge the various versions of the history and work through disagreements, as well as their issues for development.³⁶⁵ A comparable project was 'conducted by Araújo and the Grupo Musicultura in Rio de Janeiro, notable for exemplifying Paulo Freire's dialogic process,³⁶⁶ the ethnographic research represents 'a dialogue of different voices' resulting from a two-year cooperative effort between university students at the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro Ethnomusicology lab and youth involved in NGO-run community outreach programs based in Maré, Rio's second largest *favela*.'³⁶⁷

As Araújo points out:

What Freire called the 'culture of silence' prevailed for a few months during these encounters.³⁶⁸ The resident participants would not risk extended commentaries or go beyond bringing up personal accounts of immediate facts or, at most, their own personal reaction to them (e.g., brief evaluative references to musical taste). Gradually, however, group discussions began to go beyond individual and immediate perceptions and towards more reflexive comments resulting from the increased exercise of distancing, and the absorption of non-immediate references (e.g., short readings selected from academic or journalistic texts, and videos suggested by the university participants), which at times corroborated, widened, or aided in rethinking direct experience. After nine to ten months of meetings, the resident participants felt more at ease to lead the discussions themselves, [...] and depended less on designated mediators to define and devise their research interests and strategies.³⁶⁹

Impey worked with a community during reconstruction in South Africa's Northern KwaZulu-Natal province during 'action-based research', she guided 'local residents in establishing an ongoing documentation/archival project to preserve Dukuduku's unique musical assets, which facilitated discussions of 'traditional meaning' (as claimed and understood by Dukuduku residents), identity and self-representation.'³⁷⁰ Thereafter, she

³⁶⁵ Although development will be taking place in the form of cohesion and solidarity.

³⁶⁶ Freire, 1985 [1970].

³⁶⁷ Dirksen, cited Araújo, 2006, p. 303.

³⁶⁸ Freire, 1970.

³⁶⁹ Araújo, 2013, p.34.

³⁷⁰ Impey, 2002, p.404.

guided 'the residents in mounting a long-term exhibit to share with visitors.'³⁷¹ In the Dukuduku community residents 'took [...] control of the entire program, which was designed to advance social conservation, community reconstruction, sustainable development, and cultural tourism.'³⁷²

For the Ga a process of dialogue might be guided by Ga scholars and students working in a collaborations between the University and the communities. The process might embrace the visual arts, mythology, music, and performing arts, providing education and training opportunities at the same time as enhancing identity. Young people might be offered training in recording and archiving oral knowledge, and sharing community events between Ga traditional areas.

Pilot project: Methodology

The approach can learn from the applied action research of Araújo in the Rio *Flavelas*, and Impey's work with the Dukuduku residents, as well as the oral history approach used by Tsey with the Botoku communities. The process could give the opportunity for participating communities to 'routinely reflect through dialogue on events in oral history,' particularly but not exclusively using music.³⁷³ Further, opportunities for reflection might concern how they do things, 'how they are doing; what is working, what is not working; who is benefiting and who is missing out, and what needs to happen to improve the situation.'³⁷⁴ A regular feedback mechanism and social events would create solidarity, and provide an opportunity for local people to both challenge and measure progress in real life situations. Such applied work could include disciplines such as musicology, dance, traditional theatre, social anthropology, social science, history and visual artists linked together to bring 'flow' to the various components of community in development,³⁷⁵ involving Ghanaian scholars and culture bearers.

My field-research explored some of the ways in which music and dance have played a part in the survival of Ga as a group, *obonu*, (court drum and dance) *asafo* (warrior drum, dance and song) and *adowa* (womens *afaso*).³⁷⁶ Further research could examine how culture is expressed in oral/aural history that might be used and participated in during community drama,

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² Dirksen.

³⁷³ Tsey, 2011, p. 21.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Families, Quarters, councils of elders, Chieftaincy.

³⁷⁶ Pre the productions of the National Ensemble.

including cultural education in schools. A large proportion of oral knowledge is stored in the songs and performance techniques, which would require Ga speaking musicologists and linguists to interpret a written or aural representation, confirmed and agreed on in each traditional area.

Language and the art of proverbs in African song text and drama is an essential component; understanding the narrative is 'part of the common conceptual consciousness.'³⁷⁷ Knowing the language on its own is not enough in oral societies, where the art of language and the proverb is 'learned by apprenticeship'³⁷⁸ from childhood. For the Ga culture, values and history were introduced in the family using a 'technique called *yitsontao*,³⁷⁹ that involved 'repetitive imparting of knowledge followed by testing at each repetition to ensure that the knowledge is eventually permanently [remembered]'.³⁸⁰ This methods of teaching and learning local knowledge systems are disappearing with the break-down of the extended family system, and cosmopolitan domination of popular culture and education.

Possible participatory activities during a pilot project:

- A process of dialogue that takes into account what Freire calls the 'culture of silence'³⁸¹ and allows the time necessary for participants to fully engage.
- A process of creative expression³⁸² that values language and the construction and reconstruction of proverbs could bring people together to produce *Adesa* or *Adaawe* performance to include social commentary, on themes of importance to the participants, as well as themes from oral history.
- Events could be held that utilise the songs that are about coming together for a common agenda, songs of local significance that strengthen bonding, fishermen's songs, *afaso*, *kpashimo*, *kpa groups* and *kpelejoo*. Such events and/or competitions could be held monthly in the community.

³⁷⁷ Morrison, ed Ansu-Kyeremen, 2005, p. 132.

³⁷⁸ Walter Ong, 1982, Cited ed Ansu-Kyeremen, 2005. P.132

³⁷⁹ Daniel Tetteh Osabu-Kle, < <http://carleton.ca/africanstudies/wp-content/uploads/Ga-People-and-Homowo-Festival.pdf> > [accessed 24.07.2014]. pp.1-15. 'The Ga people believed that there is a portion of the brain called *yitsontao*, a slate in the brain on which knowledge can be written and stored permanently and be retrieved when necessary'.p.5.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ Freire, 1970.

³⁸² Oral or written.

- Local drama could be produced using *adesa* or *adaawe* to reinforce real issues and enact solutions, through LCS in community centres or open spaces.
- Activities using visual arts, mapping and mythology might document the community settlements at the various times during evolution. These could be achieved through cross-generation education in schools or community centres.
- The elders, and royal families might work together with young trainee cultural researchers who could document the lineage groups and their achievements.
- Young people could be trained as community researchers, interacting with elders and family members of clans and lineage groups, to collate oral information as audio, audio-visual, or still photographs.³⁸³
- Young people might be trained in the process of producing an archive of tangible and intangible knowledge, and making it available during exhibitions.³⁸⁴
- These archives might generate income for community resources through direct sales, exhibitions and concerts.

Mobilisation

Mobilisation within the 'traditional councils' could engage with the heads and elders of quarters, and professional groups, head of farming, *Okwaafiatse*, and the head of fishing, *Woleiatse*, the *Wulomo* or chief priest and clan captains, *asafoiatsemei*³⁸⁵ and *asafoianyemei*. These are the people who embody the basic social organisations of the Ga and are able (if willing) to mobilise grass-root activities.

Activities could be moderated by the Ga students and scholars as well as traditional councils. The chiefs and queen mothers could be lobbied to provide funding, and could in turn lobby parliament through the Ministry for Chieftaincy and Traditional Affairs.

³⁸³ Impey, 2002, Similar to the initiative Impey describes as community cultural and environmental documentation initiative at the Silethukukhanya High School in Khula Village.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ Osabu-Kle, 2008, In the precolonial days, the Ga army was divided into *asafoi* (singular *asafo*). *Asafoiatse* is a male captain. Its plural form is *asafoiatsemei*. *Asafoianye* is a female captain and its plural form is *asafoianyemei*.

6.3. Conclusion

The fore-going are hypothetical ideas that have been formulated during a very short period of research, and are envisaged to engage a self-help approach to the community development needs of Ga people. Many of these ideas came from the Ga's own culture bearers during discussions in the field. To flesh out the ideas a team of Ga people would need to reflect on and work up the ideas and theme further.

The determining factors of the development needs of Ga people are not addressed here, although clearly multidimensional issues are prevalent in the communities that Ga people can prioritise.

By working with an oral history approach in Botoku, Tsey found in Ewe oral history 'the desire for a better future has always been an integral part of their being.'³⁸⁶ He found through oral accounts that the community had instigated community self-help development initiatives including the construction of a '18 kilometre dirt road' in the 1930s, and a 'middle school' in the 1950s.³⁸⁷ This system of community development or improvement was developed from oral accounts of self-help in Ewe oral history, and the activities raised funds from migrant workers and the diaspora for most of Botoku's development needs. These are some of the positive aspects of social and community development, where communities have their own methods of addressing their current concerns.

7. General Conclusion

My own training and experience have always involved dealing directly with people, as opposed (for example) to studying theories and histories, and this dissertation only has a subject because the structure of Ga institutions, customs and beliefs, although stemming from the past, is alive in the present despite all the stresses of modernity, change and 'development'.

Due to a short period of field-research the study is incomplete, with no attempt to explore the cultural group beyond national (colonial) borders.³⁸⁸ Field-research sought to assess the different ways in which cultural

³⁸⁶ Komla Tsey, 2011, P.30.

³⁸⁷ Ibid. p.48.

³⁸⁸ My second period of field research was cut short due to me suffering and amebic liver abscess.

continuity is manifested amongst Ga communities by looking at different ways cultural expression integrates and communicates knowledge and ideas.

Research identified several performance genres in active and continuing use in Ga communities for social and religious purposes. *Adaawe* (women's groups) comment on community activities and expose wrong doings (as seen by Ga people), whilst *Kpelejoo* and Kpa shimo activities are designed, amongst other things, to influence behaviour. Additionally, *adesa* includes storytelling interspersed with song and talking dance, all of which can address various aspects of community development; health and education, social cohesion, governance structure, dispute resolution and practical projects in the environment.

Chief Nii Kweikuma IV outlined the social music of the Ga that he believed relevant for social and community development and which enhances identity: 'we have songs,' he said 'that will spur you on, with a message that is about coming together for a common agenda, songs that strengthen the bonding [...] to overcome an obstacle so it gives you an idea of unity. Of course unity is strength. If there is dissension in the community there will be no development, the moment there is unity in the community then there is development.'³⁸⁹

The Government of Ghana are keen to promote a national cultural identity, therefore it is important to acknowledge that Ga inhabit multi-ethnic communities, where other ethnic groups now live with and amongst them and have equally viable and engaging modes of social and cultural performance. These groups could use their own, equally dynamic and diverse cultural expression in community development initiatives. This would enhance the cultural variety of Accra as Ghana's capital with a rich and diverse range of cultures and cultural expression. Avorgbedor³⁹⁰ discovered over 200 Anlo-Ewe' Habɔɔ groups and associations in Accra,³⁹¹ 'most visibly articulated in performance contexts'. These and other ethnically diverse communities in the Accra plain could engage their own dynamic and diverse cultural expressions in practical community development for both the Greater Accra metropolitan area and their home communities in the Volta Region.

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ Avorgbedor, 2001, p.262.

³⁹¹ Ibid. 20 groups have in excess of 600 member.

Amongst the Ewe community of Botoku, in the Volta Region, Komla Tsey discovered by initiating an oral history project that Ewe have active, in-built methods, transmitted from generation to generation, of dealing with issues such as women's rights, child abuse and witchcraft. Additionally, Tsey discovered there was a development levy built into the social structure that required every citizen to pay towards community improvement initiatives. A citizen is defined as a person with entitlement by birth to be buried on 'ancestral land', and this definition includes migrant workers and the diaspora, even those born abroad. Before a funeral takes place the diseased must have discharged her/his development obligations. As with the Ga, the Ewe consider the funeral to be the most important ceremony in their lives.

The Ga traditional councils initiated by the lineage groups that arrived in the Accra plain continue today, and might be seen as the glue that has held the Ga together. Today there is dissension among the groups of elders and king-makers, therefore community development (in the various ways set out above) can only serve to restore and improve the councils' basic function. In light of field-research it seems clear that the elders, various clan heads, and heads local professional groups are the appropriate moderators for community development. As Nii Yartey pointed out, 'the people with whom you consult must understand where you're coming from. Their level of thinking about development should match yours.'³⁹² Performance events have the power to involve participation,³⁹³ and participation is essential for community development, in order to draw people together in a decision making process. People can discuss right and wrong behaviour as well as customs and traditions that enhance social order and stability. Through such conversations and critical assessment, customs and cultural norms could be used 'as the ground on which [Ga] stand' to decide how they may want to make improvements in their lives or environments.³⁹⁴

My questions for the research were: How can communal knowledge embedded in song narratives, music, dance and performance be used in a process of communication for participatory action towards social and human development in Ga societies? As outlined in 6.2 the repertoires used as tools for such initiatives are available in the communities, and the structure of the Ga councils would perhaps be the most appropriate for moderating, instigating and initiating such participatory action.

³⁹² Professor F Nii Yartey –Interview 3rd April 2013.Legon WS750110.

³⁹³ As can be seen in the Folio component that accompanies the dissertation.

³⁹⁴ Professor F Nii Yartey –Interview 3rd April 2013.Legon WS750110.

The second question: How can the development priorities of local people be addressed, heard, and acted upon, through local communication systems? This is explored in the Folio that accompanies this dissertation where a particular groups (Kpa) consisting of young men addressed through performance an issue of direct concern to them. Additionally, in Jamestown Ga Mashie, Adesa demonstrates the feasibility of LCS in a community.

Rebecca Dirksen highlights the work of Richard Kurin, who sets out a model of how anthropologists, folklorists, and ethnomusicologists can become catalysts or facilitators for people at the grass roots to help debate and share their culture.³⁹⁵ Additionally, Araujo demonstrates how the Ethnomusicology Laboratory, in Rio de Janeiro has been 'developing readings and discussion on, and practice in, academic collaboration with local community organizations in places where poverty and inequality, in the multidimensional sense', are commonplace.³⁹⁶ As Araujo and Tsey argue, by working through social interaction and oral knowledge systems 'researchers must be prepared to invest the necessary time and energy required, to listen deeply and to understand the way in which people use such stories to make sense of their own situation'.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁵ Rebecca Dirksen cites Richard Kurin, 1997, p. 284-85.

³⁹⁶ Araujo, 2013.

³⁹⁷ Tsey, 2011, p.152.

Recorded Interviews

Chief Nii Kweikuma IV, Interview 23rd November 2012. Jamestown. WS750038

Discussed the role of the Wulomo and the chief in Ga communities. Additionally the chief was able to discuss the role of folkloric music in the past and how such music could enhance community development in contemporary society.

Mustapha Tettey Addy, Interview. 26th November 2012. Kokrobitie. WS750050.

Ga master musician, elder and culture bearer, discussed the role of music in the community, past and present.

Isaac Nii Kwartey Owoo, Interview, 3rd December 2012. Community Theatre, Jamestown. WS750058/9.

Young Ga culture bearer working in various development roles in Jamestown Accra.

Asafoatse Aboadoni (Teshie), 4th December 2012. National Theatre Accra. WS750062.

Discussed the roles of afaso in the Teshie Ga community and how during colonisation the role was marginalised in Accra. Aboadoni spoke extensively about Ga culture, as well as the Kpa groups and Kpa shimo activities at Homowo.

George Nii Oto Nelson, Interview 5th December 2012. Mantse Ga Mashie. WS750067.

Nelson introduced me to the Obonu drums and their role in Ga ceremonial activity.

Korkor Nunu. Interview 25th of March 2013. Kokrobitie. WS750089/91.

Discussed the adawee activities of the past and how/why they have almost disappeared.

Professor F Nii Yartey, Interview 3rd April 2013. Legon. WS750109/10.

Nii Yartey was/is the senior spokesperson for Ga culture. He led the discussion and provided a context for Ga Culture past and present, with additional recommendations for the future of the Ga people.

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